THE ULTIMATE MUSIC GUIDE

ROXY MUSIC

REMADE
50TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION
REMODELLED

"We've still got that rough edge"
ROXY ON TOUR, 2022

THE ALBUMS, BY BRYAN FERRY

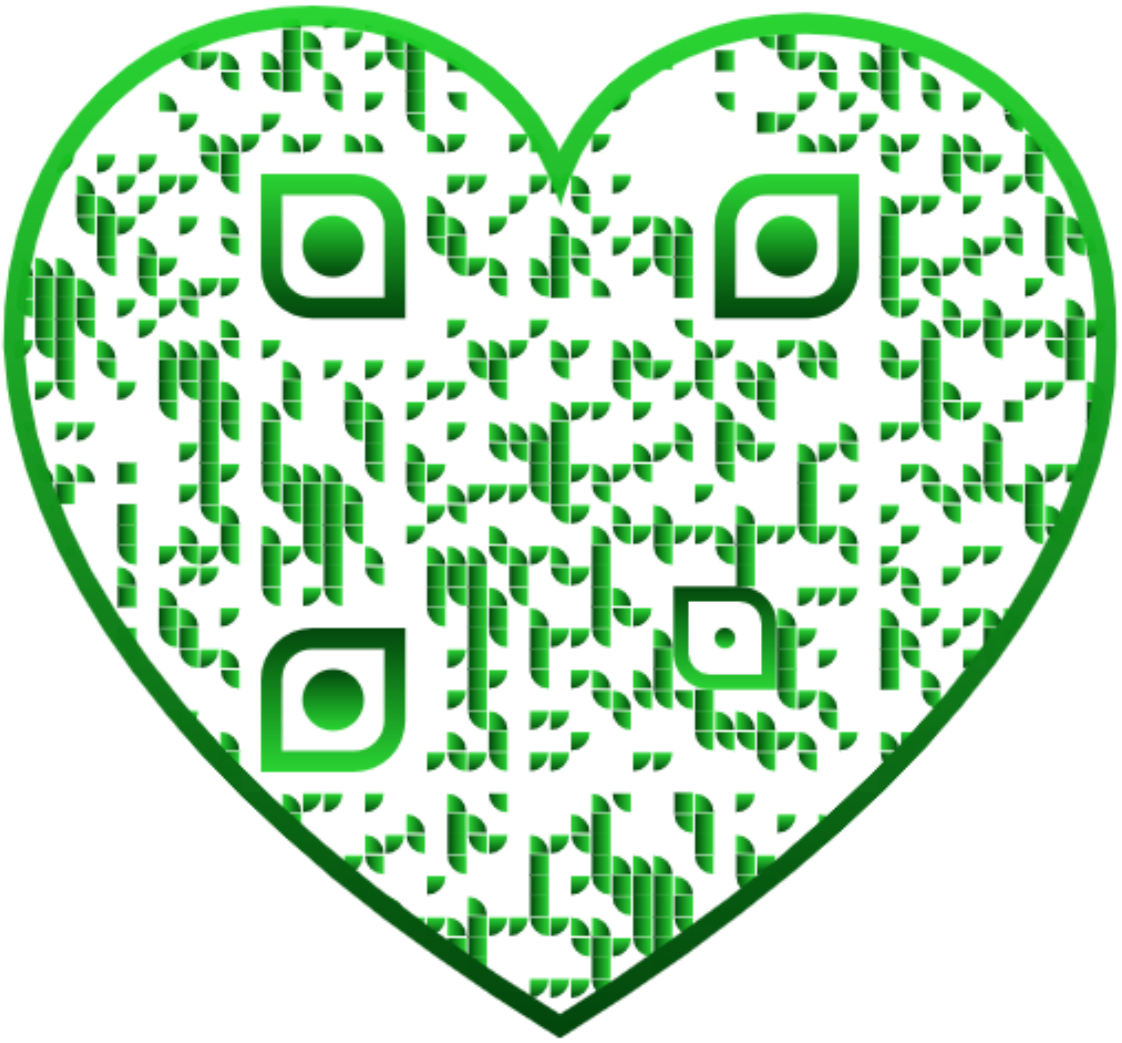
A FABULOUS CREATION

Roxy Music
the complete story

FROM THE MAKERS OF **UNCUT**

IN-DEPTH REVIEWS

AMAZING INTERVIEWS



50 YEARS OF ROXY MUSIC!

As important a landmark as that is, and as much as we've wanted to honour it in this latest deluxe *Ultimate Music Guide*, it's one that Bryan Ferry – arch-conceptualist, chief composer and lead vocalist of Roxy Music – is ultimately pretty modest about. "We felt that 50 years was worth celebrating," he tells us in the course of an exclusive new Roxy Music interview. The band spoke to us from the US where they're on an arena tour which arrives in the UK this week. "Seeing us together on stage is something our fans have wanted for a long time..."

Looking back over the band's amazing career, it's no wonder why that might be. For the BBC's Valerie Singleton in 1979, they were the group who "brought stylishly-dressed men and scantily-clad ladies back into fashion". Which was definitely one part of it. If you wanted to go a bit further, you could say that with Roxy, Bryan Ferry devised a project in which he would not only be writer and director of a widescreen production, he would also be its surprisingly self-effacing matinee idol, too.

Fronting the hugely successful "glam" incarnation of the band, Ferry approached making music as dizzying montage, in which relatable tales of love and dancing were transformed into the argot of some unimaginably chic demi-monde.

It was witty, sexy (at times controversially so), and it brought eyeshadow and challenging avant-garde music into the mainstream. You thought David Bowie did that? As Bryan Ferry was at pains to point out, Bowie was very good, but Roxy were using viola and synthesiser. Bowie, meanwhile, still used *guitars*.

Nor was this vision diminished on the other side of Roxy's three-year hiatus. When the band peaked again, with *Avalon*, it was with a chilly Arthurian fantasia imagined from business class. Even while he braced vituperation from those who didn't get it, Ferry retained composure as he has since, going on to make more utterly unpredictable music.

In this 148-page deluxe edition, you'll find in-depth reviews of all the music made by the band (and solo work by its members), and also the pick of classic interviews from the archives of *NME*, *Melody Maker* and *Uncut*. "We've got a lot of confidence in what we're doing," Ferry told Richard Williams when his band had only a demo tape to their name in 1971, "and we're determined to make it in as civilised a way as possible. We're not interested in scuffling," he continued. "If someone will invest some time and money in us, we'll be very good indeed."

You've got to love a happy ending. Enjoy the magazine.

John Robinson, Editor

BARRY KING / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

ROXY MUSIC

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Phil Manzanera and Paul Thomson live at Madison Square Garden, NYC, September 12, 2022

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES, STEVEN FERDMAN/GETTY IMAGES FOR LIVENATION

Roxy Music in 1972: (l–r, back) Phil Manzanera, Bryan Ferry, Paul Thompson, (front) Eno and Andy Mackay

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PICTORIAL PRESS LTD/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

"THE CHEMISTRY FEELS MAGICAL"

STEVENFERDMAN/GETTY IMAGESFORLIVENATION

AT Madison Square Garden things are finally going well, very well indeed. Beneath banks of video screens swirling with their classic imagery, Roxy Music are at their most suave and celebratory - honouring the urbane, exploratory and downright weird divergences of their back catalogue.

Bryan Ferry, still the life of the party at 77, flits between personae: art rock sophisticate on "Re-Make/Re-Model" and "Do The Strand" and louche pop crooner on the copious *Avalon* cuts. Andy Mackay, 76, expands his woodwind adventuring to include outings on cor anglais and Aerophone and takes centre-stage for a lustrous "Tara", featuring a pictorial tribute to Queen Elizabeth II. Phil Manzanera, the junior partner at 71, charges through his "Ladytron" freak-out amid a storm of visuals he later describes as "a psychedelic experience... it goes off into the stratosphere." Paul Thompson, also 71, keeps the beat solid. In cohering such a broad-ranging career, it's a wonderful spectacle to behold.

"It was a great show"

ANDY MACKAY

Especially since, for Roxy Music, Madison Square Garden was once a 20,000-capacity nest of demons. In 1972 the band played a notoriously disastrous gig there, supporting Jethro Tull. "Everything that could go wrong went wrong," Andy Mackay says of a set which theNew York Timesclaimed left an audience bewildered by their "synthesised weirdness" in a state of "benign indifference". "They couldn't

"The last time?": Roxy at Madison Square Garden, NYC, September 12, 2022

Autumn 2022. Fifty years since the birth of Roxy Music, the band are reunited to celebrate their many triumphs – and tell us about it. There's a definitive set of remastered albums. A world tour. They've even laid to rest the ghost of playing Madison Square Garden. "It's great to feel it all coming together," BRYAN FERRY tells MARK BEAUMONT…

make head nor tail of us," Andy sighs. "In all our minds it's the recurring nightmare…"

Returning there half a century later to headline the biggest show yet on Roxy Music's 50th Anniversary reunion tour was pivotal for morale. "It was a great show," says Andy with no little relief; he talks about it almost as if the bemused crowd of 1972 had been hanging around in the interim to see what this bizarre bunch of art rockers might do next. "It was a really great audience of people who knew our music and some, I think, who didn't, who perhaps were surprised."

"I'm used to performing in smaller venues," says singer Bryan Ferry, on whose shoulders the whole Roxy Music enterprise ultimately rests. "But this is an arena tour, with a more ambitious visual production, and it's been great to feel it all coming together over the past few shows."

BY the time *Uncut* connects with the members of Roxy Music in their Chicago hotel rooms, the reformed band have played six shows on the US/Canada leg of their tour first tour in 11 years.

"They're really enjoying it," says Phil Manzanera, of the audiences they've met so far. "They're of all different ages, funnily enough, and they seem to know all the words and they're singing along. After a couple of years of Covid and all that isolation, not being able to really see people, it's really very enjoyable and heart-warming to be out there playing these songs.

"And also," he continues, mindful that he's speaking of a band in which most of the principal performers are now in their seventies and who last reformed in 2011, "at the back of your mind, [*you're*] thinking, 'Well, this could be the last time you see us'."

If Manzanera is pleasantly surprised by the response to the reformed Roxy, then it's a surprise sweetened by the happy accident of the reunion itself. Rather than a product of necessity, Roxy were more… nudged back into being in 2019 when they were selected for induction into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame. When the scale of the event hit home with them, they ended up putting in substantial preparatory work.

Roxy turn 50, live in Toronto, September 7, 2022

"We realised that in America it's very important," explains Phil. "So we thought, 'Wow, we'd better spend a lot of time preparing'. We went to Brooklyn and we rehearsed for a week, because we wanted to acquit ourselves well. We knew there'd be lots of great other musicians there in the room. There's the Fleetwood Mac people, Janet Jackson, the Radiohead people. Brian May's in the audience. We've got to acquit ourselves well. So we really tried hard. And we did. We acquitted ourselves. It was a proud moment."

Andy Mackay remembers the night as being "pretty nerve wracking. Apart from being televised, it was live in a huge 35,000-seater... The Brooklyn Center; crazy place. We hadn't played together at that point for 10 years. We had enough rehearsal for four numbers...

"But you sit at a table waiting while other people get inducted and over-running their speeches. You're sitting there getting a bit agitated. You can't really drink because you're just about to play live. My only sadness is that Paul [*original Roxy drummer Paul Thompson*] wasn't well. Paul is obviously with us now and is in fantastic form. It's a shame that just a couple of years ago, he had a problem and we couldn't persuade him."

"Eddie Jobson [*Roxy keyboard/violin whizz 1973-6*] came and played," Manzanera remembers of the night. "Eno said, 'Good luck mates, I'm not travelling anymore by plane, environmental reasons, but I'm very happy we got it'.

"We made the best of what we could. And we played '...Dream Home...', which I thought at the time, 'they're never going to broadcast this' and they didn't. A song about an inflatable doll – it's not surprising!"

THE Hall Of Fame reunion was not, however, the impetus for the current 13-date arena tour, Manzanera claims. That emerged more informally at Christmas last year, after he'd spent the pandemic remotely adding guitar to some Ferry solo tracks.

"We live quite near each other in the country and one day last Christmas he said, 'Fancy coming up, have a cup of tea?'," recalls Phil. "I went over and then he said, 'Do you fancy doing some gigs?' I realised it was going to be our 50th and I said, 'Well, if there's ever a time to do it, it'd be now. So yeah, let's do it'."

"We felt that 50 years was worth celebrating," says Ferry today, "and seeing us together on stage is something our fans have wanted for a long time."

What began over a cup of tea has since evolved into a rather nicely choreographed celebration of Roxy Music at 50. There's the tour of course, with a substantial percentage of the classic lineup represented on stage alongside some helpful supporting musicians [see panel]. Bryan Ferry has lately also published a volume of collected lyrics.

To underline the importance of the band's musical legacy, though, there's also been a comprehensive reissue campaign of the eight classic Roxy Music albums produced during 1972-1982, their splendid decade of recording, all presented as half-speed vinyl remasters. Their 2001 collection *The Best Of Roxy Music* now appears for the first time as a double vinyl album.

Roxy's is a superb legacy, and in their lives outside of Roxy Music, the band's members have of course played Roxy Music songs. But as Phil Manzanera explains, there's something particular about the way the music sounds when rendered by the original players.

"It's the summation of all our inadequacies which creates the Roxy sound," he says, smiling warmly. "We said when we started that we were inspired amateurs, and we wanted to get better. But we have maintained that element of inspired amateurs, despite having 50 years of refining and making albums and supposedly getting professional. We've still got that rough edge which, when you put it together with how we actually play our instruments, it creates the Roxy sound."

Ferry is perhaps understandably a little more reverential in his statements on the band's unique musical DNA. "The Roxy songs are no stranger to me, and I've been performing my versions over the years in my solo tours," he says. "But it's been special working again with Andy, Phil and Paul. They each have a strong personality in their playing, and the chemistry on certain songs feels magical."

WHEN the offer came to play a reunion, the band found it attractive in that it presented the opportunity to play to a large number of people in the United States, as befits the band's status, but to do so without a lengthy tour – presenting instead, a compact 10-show itinerary.

In preparation, Roxy Music decamped to Wimbledon to run through the catalogue, then had two weeks of rehearsals with additional musicians from Ferry's band, changing the keys of some songs to better suit Bryan's maturing voice.

"I've had to relearn everything, and learn how to play it differently on a guitar, which has taken me quite a few months," Manzanera says. "It's quite a head job, actually, and for Andy too. When you change the key, some of the notes don't exist on a saxophone or an oboe. Some people do Sudoku, I've had to do this!

"Going back to the original master tracks and listening to what we played, there's me trying to play what the 21-year-old Manzanera played and thinking, 'How did they allow me to play that?' That's just bonkers stuff."

Roxy at the Rock & Roll Hall Of Fame Induction Ceremony show, Barclays Center, NYC, March 29, 2019

MATTHEW BECKER, KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES

Manzanera and Mackay live: blowing up a storm

Revisiting the songs gave him a fresh appreciation for the art of Roxy. "We looked at an 80-song catalogue ," says Phil, "and obviously you can only play 20-21 before people lose the will to live at a concert. I started examining songs and I was just amazed at Bryan's lyrics over the span of that period. I started re-evaluating how he had all the metaphors and the aphorisms and all the stuff in the early lyrics, and then by the end of *Avalon* he'd distilled it into virtual haikus. It's like an ambient haiku album.

"He really is an artist, he wants a little dab of something and he won't be satisfied till there's a beautiful picture there. My re-evaluation of all the people in Roxy has been an interesting journey for me, whether it's Brian Eno or Bryan Ferry or Andy Mackay, it makes me think, 'Wow, I was just so lucky to be in the right place at the right time and meet these guys'."

Plucking songs from the breadth of their canon, Roxy set about tailoring a setlist that would satisfy the hardcore - with tracks such as "In Every Dream Home...", "Tara" and "Ladytron" speckled between other crowd-pleasers - while also being adaptable to differing international tastes.

"It covers the spectrum," says Andy Mackay. "You want to give a mixture of the historical, and obviously people in America particularly want to hear the *Avalon* songs, 'More Than This' is our biggest streaming record now. That's taken over from some of the others - 'Love Is The Drug' and 'Jealous Guy' were bigger at one time. We're revisiting some of the stuff from the first album, which is great, a couple from *For Your Pleasure* and in between. Some we haven't done on stage... I haven't actually played some of them for 20-odd years. It keeps you on your toes."

"Roxy Music has been a huge part of my life"

BRYAN FERRY

WITH the band's chemistry having proved enduring, it's the technology around it that has elevated the Roxy live experience since their last tour in 2011. "What we can do at the show is just light years ahead," Manzanera says. "It's almost like being in a sci-fi movie, because all the images can be projected in an interesting way and we've got a very unusual screen set up. You get the whole history of Roxy and all the iconography up there during the show. So this really is a celebration of 50 years. Bryan spent a lot of time working on that. I was worried he was spending too much time on that and not on the singing or the music, but actually, as always, he was right, it paid off."

Meanwhile, the band have been revisiting their catalogue for the reissue campaign. Listening back, what struck them about the records? "That they're different," Manzanera says. "You see an evolution from the way the band's personnel was and how that affected the styles of the songs as it progressed over that 10-year period. There's light years of difference between the first album and *Avalon*. We did eight albums, and each time we were trying to do something that we hadn't done before. It wasn't always successful, but it did produce some great tracks within those 80 tracks. It was always a journey without a destination."

"We didn't really have time to think, we just did what we were doing, and when you listen to it now it does sound as if we were being quite bold and experimental," says Mackay. "Some of it was bold experiment. Some of the things from the first album, like 'The Bob (Medley)', I listened to it the other day. It's quite strange. It's quite proggy, experimental. It's interesting. And some of it was just a kind of enthusiasm that we were able to do it and get away with it."

"Roxy Music represents the first 10 years of my career, so it's been a huge part of my life," says Bryan Ferry. "Some of my best work was done on those albums and I was lucky to be part of such a unique group. Along with the reissues I've recently published my book of lyrics, and putting that together brought back a lot of memories from the years we spent together making those albums. We tried to make each record sound a bit different from the last, and listening back to them the progression makes some sort of sense to me."

THAT Roxy's records were consistently ahead of the curve – predicting and influencing art pop, new wave, new romanticism, synthpop and even the electronic experimentalism of today – was an accident of their particular 1970s artistic freedoms, they argue; and the magic of the band a fusion of ricocheting talents.

"I knew the first time I met these guys, when I went for an audition, I thought, these guys are very special," says Manzanera. "There's something about them. Eno and Bryan Ferry and Andy and Paul, in their own way they just happened to coincide. In some sense it's a band, in some sense it's a collective."

"Bryan very consciously saw Roxy as an ongoing art project for him as well," says Mackay. "Thank goodness I knocked on Bryan's door back in 1971."

When talks turn to the future, there's a glint in Roxy's eye. Mackay hints that, in the wake of the tour, he'd be interested in returning to "some half-written songs from the 2000s... we could maybe spend a bit of time doing that. I'd very much like to actually." And is Manzanera right when he suggests this might be the last time Roxy's fans get to see them live?

"We never say never," says Mackay, while pointing to the difficulties in continuing the current tour into Europe due to Covid and Brexit. "Now you've got to realise, any tour could be the last tour. It's a celebration of 50 years, I doubt we'll be celebrating 60, but who knows? Nothing's ruled out."

For Phil Manzanera, you sense, every day on the road with Roxy is a blessing. "It's a great opportunity to actually play again on a big stage," he says. "I never imagined I'd be doing this aged 71. It's just a wonderful treat!"

Roxy Music play Glasgow OVO (October 10), Manchester AO Arena (12) and London O2 Arena (14). Each of their studio albums is now available as a new half-speed cut vinyl edition. The Best Of Roxy Music is also available for the first time on vinyl now. Bryan Ferry's Lyrics is published by Chatto & Windus

FOR YOUR PLEASURE

Who is on stage with Roxy Music, September/ October 2022

BRYAN FERRY [vocals; keyboards]

ANDY MACKAY [woodwind]

PHIL MANZANERA [lead guitar]

PAUL THOMPSON [drums]

and...

NEIL JASON [Bass]
From the US, Neil has worked with a roll-call of legends from Lennon to Michael Jackson, Mick Jagger and Paul McCartney

TOM VANSTIPHOUT [Guitar]
Belgium Tom is a member of Bryan Ferry's band, and records as a solo artist

JORJA CHALMERS [Saxophones and Keyboards]
"Dark ambient" in her solo work Jorja has done time with Take That, as well as Bryan Ferry

CHRISTIAN GULINO [Musical Director/ Keyboards]
Musical director Christian has platinum pop pedigree. With Bryan Ferry since 2017, he's also worked with Kylie, Sophie Ellis-Bextor and John Newman

CHLOE BETH SMITH [Keyboards]
Another musician from Ferry's band, for whom she has produced orchestral and choral arrangements, Londoner Chloe studied in Leeds and at the Sorbonne

TUGG THE DRUMMER [Percussion]
Or, as his mum calls him, Nathan Curran. A longtime drummer with Basement Jaxx, here provides able support to Paul Thompson

FONZI THORNTON [Backing vocals]
What a CV! Once a member of the Chic organisation, Fonzi has sung with Bowie, Jagger and Luther Vandross – and sang on *Avalon*, too

SENAB ADEKUNLE [Backing vocals]
Some strong appearances on Senab's résumé: from Adele and Katy B, all the way to Cher

ROXY MUSIC

ROXY MUSIC

RELEASED: JUNE 16, 1972

Unobtainable beauty and impossible riches fuel Roxy's celluloid dreams. Should make the cognoscenti think. **BY JIM WIRTH**

PHIL MANZANERA seemingly learned little from the sharp looks that greeted him when he turned up for his second Roxy Music gig wearing a cricket jumper. Already on their third guitar player, and with their debut album set to be recorded within weeks, the larval Roxy did not punish this stylistic faux pas, though the 21-year-old's style radar remained a little off when he arrived at the photo session for *Roxy Music* in a white shirt his mother had festooned with "glittery things". Roxy's house stylist surveyed him with some dismay as Manzanera later recalled to *Uncut*: "Antony Price said, 'Phil: no, no, no and no. Put this on: black leather jacket. Put these glasses on.' Boom. Done."

Released in June 1972, *Roxy Music* was restyled on the hoof in a similar fashion. The sabre-toothed sexpot image of Kari-Ann Muller on the ultra-glossy cover perfectly encapsulated the seductive, playful confrontation that art-school smarts Bryan Ferry, Brian Eno and Andy Mackay aspired to. The record within, though, is a blurry snapshot of work in rapid progress. Preening and princely on "Re-Make/Re-Model", plastic soulful on "2HB", impish and playful on "Bitters End", *Roxy Music* documents a band that were quirky and audacious but – despite the bug-eye sunglasses – not quite ready for their close-up.

A cluttered demo tape earned Roxy a *Melody Maker* piece as an unsigned band in August 1971, jumped up collier's son Ferry making a haughty come-and-get-me plea to the music business: "The average age of this band is about 27, and we're not interested in scuffling." Further exposure came with a BBC session, but Roxy remained a bewildering jumble even after the arrival of no-nonsense drummer Paul Thompson: ex-Nice man Davy O'List's attention-seeking guitar crowded out Eno's electro-twiddling, Mackay's ghostly oboe and Ferry's vocal mélange of Elvis Presley and Maurice Chevalier.

Hired to replace O'List in February 1972, self-confessed "primitive guitarist" Manzanera simplified things a little, but – having played live infrequently – Roxy were ill-prepared for the album's recording sessions that spring. "They just couldn't play well enough," remembered producer Peter Sinfield. To make things worse, bassist Graham Simpson suffered an acid-induced nervous breakdown in the studio and kept bursting into tears. A frowny-faced Bob Harris accused them of being over-hyped and amateurish when he introduced them on BBC's *Old Grey Whistle Test* days after *Roxy Music* was released. He had a point.

However, even if they were shambolic, Roxy had a sense of purpose. From the first explosive thud of "Re-Make/Re-Model", *Roxy Music* strives to distance itself from its contemporaries. An explosion of fluorescent brights in a predominantly beige and denim age, Ferry's great flight from the everyday was inspired by pursuing a horsey girl he spotted at the Reading Festival to an address in decadent Knightsbridge, Roxy's twin drivers of unobtainable beauty and impossible riches combined.

The fleeting thrill of looking without touching morphs into a more unsettling fantasy of touching without feeling on the eerie "Ladytron". Ferry's mission to turn the tables on a reluctant conquest ("*I'll use you and I'll confuse you, and then I'll lose you*"),

CRITICS' VERDICTS

"Very electronic, very camp, and very, very good. Best track by far is the superb 'Re-make/Re-model', which uncanily reminds you of all the rock songs you ever heard until you listen for Eno's synthesiser."
Tony Tyler, *NME*, 17/6/72

"Extraordinary... 'Roxy Music' is a concept which not everyone will latch onto at first, but which is as rich in performance as in promise."
Richard Williams, *MM*, 24/6/72

TRACKMARKS

1. Re-Make/ Re-Model ★★★★
2. Ladytron ★★★★
3. If There Is Something ★★★
4. 2HB ★★★★
5. The Bob (Medley) ★★★★
6. Chance Meeting ★★★★
7. Would You Believe? ★★★
8. Sea Breezes ★★★
9. Bitters End ★★★★

Label: Island
Produced by: Peter Sinfield
Recorded at: Command Studios, London
Personnel: Bryan Ferry (voice, piano), Phil Manzanera (guitar), Graham Simpson (bass guitar), Andy Mackay (oboe, saxophone), Eno (synthesiser, tapes), Paul Thompson (drums)
Highest chart position: UK 10; US –

the lyrics read like a clipping from the *Club International* letters page, but Eno's jarring manipulation of Manzanera's guitar slashes in the extended coda are a strident restatement of Roxy's futuristic aspirations, despite the old-world sexual politics.

How seriously Ferry took his misogyny remains a moot point, since everything on *Roxy Music* comes in ironic inverted commas. His demented self-abasement before his beloved on Biba-styled hoe-down "If There Is Something" ("*growing potatoes by the score*", indeed) is a grotesque parody of Stax soulfulness, his emoting on "Chance Meeting" and "Sea Breezes" transparently insincere. Moreover, he objectifies men as much as women. Roxy Music's understated fulcrum, "2HB", dissects *Casablanca* scene-by-scene, but what interests Ferry is not troubled Ingrid Bergman, but Humphrey Bogart's look of square-jawed chaleur. That he doesn't get the girl is almost a relief; "*finding not keeping's the lesson,*" Ferry keens knowingly.

Fundamentally, love Roxy Music-style eschews entanglements, which might explain why attempts to create a *Casablanca*-style tearjerker on the sketchy side two fall flat. The multi-part "The Bob (Medley)" maps a World War II romance ("Bob" being an abbreviation for "Battle Of Britain"), but high emotional drama is too gauche for Roxy's refined sensibilities. The best thing about the Noël Coward-ly "Chance Meeting" is the feedback fog that hangs over it and the anguished "Sea Breezes" smells distinctly fishy. Manzanera, meanwhile, remains "a little bit iffy" about rock'n'roll pastiche "Would You Believe", a costume change too far.

Roxy return to the post-modern hall of mirrors for oddball closer "Bitters End"; its "*raven of October*" and "*pale fountains pouring pink gin*" are jet-age distortions of the 1930s art-deco sound Ferry has fetishised throughout his career. Cabaret night at the Algonquin Round Table, it is a novelty with a cerebral sting in the tail, Ferry taking a deep breath as he wrings every nuance out of the slyly self-referential final line: "*Should make the cognoscenti think.*"

FROM THE FIRST EXPLOSIVE THUD, ROXY MUSIC STRIVES TO DISTANCE ITSELF FROM ITS CONTEMPORARIES

ROXY MUSIC certainly attracted curiosity, making the Top 30 in July 1972, but it did not make it to the Top 10 until Roxy's debut single – recorded after the album was released – reached No 4 in August 1972. A ruthless streamlining of their vision, "Virginia Plain" expertly bolts Eno's unearthly synth, Mackay's clarion oboe and Manzanera's strident guitar into the arc of a direct, three-minute pop song. Ferry's lyrics reduce the Roxy mythos to a series of seductive flashing images, starting with them signing for Island ("*make me a deal and make it straight*"), and accelerating into a Peter Blake-ish pop-art fantasy-world. Roxy's future, it promised, would be a delirious rollercoaster ride, all Warhol glamour and polished chrome. *Blonde On Blonde* Bob Dylan in Velvet Underground sex boots, it transformed them from smug aesthetes into superstars.

"Virginia Plain" also made their debut album obsolete. By contrast with the glorious tomorrow they had mapped out, it was lumpy, slow, tentative. However, given their aversion to "scuffling", Roxy may have had to get it slightly wrong on record to recalibrate their stylistic radar. Re-made and re-modelled, they forged on into their annus mirabilis with a sound finally as brilliant as their look. Boom. Done.

"A Hampstead intellectual would say, 'How camp!'"

The thrilling first year in the life of ROXY MUSIC. Guided by "inspired amateurism" and hoping for financial investment, they promise great things. "Audiences," BRYAN FERRY tells RICHARD WILLIAMS, "appreciate the fact that we perform, rather than just play."

TAKEN FROM
MELODY MAKER
07/08/1971

A CURIOUS feature of modern rock music is the way it's taken potential artists away from other spheres. Men who might have become poets, painters, or even classical musicians have instead found an outlet for their creativity in the new medium, which also offers the chance of wide exposure – not to mention bags of loot.

Five years ago, for instance it would have been unthinkable for Bryan Ferry to have entered rock'n'roll. Fine Arts graduates from Newcastle University just didn't do that sort of thing. But now, in 1971, Bryan is leading a band called Roxy which has produced one of the most exciting demo tapes ever to come my way. Although it was recorded on a small home tape machine in what sounds like a Dutch barn it carries enough innovatory excitement to suggest that Roxy may well be ahead of the field in the avant-rock stakes. As some of us have already realised, Roxy will have to change their name when they find a manager and a record company. Elektra already have a (rather duff) American band with the same name, so Bryan's looking for something fresh, but with the same connotations: Essoldo, Ritz, Plaza something like that.

Bryan sang with a soul band called Gas Board at Newcastle five years ago, and since then he's been teaching, truck-driving and sculpting in London. Musically he was practically dormant until, a year ago, an old friend called Graham Simpson arrived in London. Graham dropped out of university to play bass with a band called Cock-A-Hoop, which was managed by Terry Ellis, and when he came south, he and Bryan began to work together.

Before last Christmas, they added Andy

BRIAN COOKE/REDFERNS

On the rooftop: Roxy Music in west London, 1972 – (l-r) Bryan Ferry, Andy Mackay, Paul Thompson, Rik Kenton, Phil Manzanera and Brian Eno

BRIAN COOKE/REDFERNS

Mackay from Reading University on electric alto and oboe, and he brought with him a VCS3 synthesiser, which is operated by electronics wizard Brian Eno. Andy played in the National Youth Orchestra, and is currently teaching while Eno has given performances of his own electronic pieces.

The drummer, Dexter Lloyd, also has symphonic experience. An American, he played with the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, and of him Bryan says: "He was the only drummer we tried who could play anything creative on the slow numbers." He also plays vibes and teaches percussion.

Finally there's the guitarist, Roger Bunn – whose background is very unlike the others. He's done the whole Wee Willie Harris/Star-Club bit, and still does a lot of session work.

To date, Roxy have done no gigs at all, but have been concentrating on rehearsing as a unit for about four months. The next step is to find a large hall in which to rehearse, and then do some quiet gigs to shake it down.

"We've got a lot of confidence in what we're doing," says Bryan, 'and we're determined to make it but in as civilised a way as possible. The average age of this band is about 27, and we're not interested in scuffling. If someone will invest some time and money in us, we'll be very good indeed."

The band's influences stretch from Ethel Merman to The Velvet Underground to jazz and they want to bring all these elements into the music, creating a very diverse approach. The electronic thing is important to them, but they are also interested in the flash and style of rock – like wearing outrageous clothes and having some kind of act. "We don't want to come on like the MJQ," says Bryan.

All it needs, then, is backing. Because from what I've heard, Roxy – or whatever they eventually decide to call themselves have a whole gang of potential, and the first manager/agent/record company to realise it will have got themselves something really worthwhile.

TAKEN FROM
MELODY MAKER
01/07/1972

PAUL THOMPSON'S tom-toms ground slowly to a shuddering halt as Eno's synthesiser simulated the sound of Firestone Wide Ovals being pushed past their limit around a fast curve. The short final chord was almost obscured by the cheers and clapping. This was last Sunday night at the Greyhound in Croydon, south London's answer to Manhattan and Spaghetti Junction rolled into one.

But it could have been several places over the past few weeks, because almost everywhere they've been, Roxy Music have been greeted with the kind of warmth that all new bands crave, but few ever achieve. To those who've watched the band's progress closely in recent months, it comes as no surprise that audiences are taking to them without being told to. Roxy's brand of skiffle is altogether too good for anyone to miss – a lovely blend of surprise and satisfaction. They seem to combine so many good things into one tightly compressed package: good writing and playing, humour, dazzling visuals, and shocks galore. Anyone who puts them in a rock revivalist bag is missing the whole point.

Bryan Ferry, writer and singer and pianist and embryonic cultural superstar, explains: "Only two songs on the album – 'Would You Believe?' and 'Bitters End' – really use elements of 1950s and 1960s music. And 'Bitters End' is quite serious – there's the ambiguity of the doo-wopping singers in the background, which gives people a certain image, against the words, which are strange and not at all the kind of thing you'd usually find in that musical context.

The Great Western Express Festival at Bardney near Lincoln, May 27, 1972

the strings on 'Will You Love Me Tomorrow'.

"We're eclectic, certainly, but it's not so much cribbing – these elements are used with a point, and that's the strength of the group." What's really surprised him is the way these back-references are going down with an audience which is presumably too young to have heard them the first time around. "At some places they've been very young indeed but the reaction has been amazingly good. We want to get through to different people on different levels, so that whereas one person, maybe a Hampstead intellectual, would say, 'How camp!', a kid would respond by saying, 'That's weird!' The kid would probably get the bigger kick."

Obviously, it's all been happening very fast for the band. Only four months ago, they had no manager or agent, and had played only a tiny handful of generally abortive gigs. Now, with a brand new bassist (Rik Kenton), and a brilliant debut album behind them, they're playing Wembley's Empire Pool tomorrow night (Friday), as the sole support to Alice Cooper.

"So far, everything we've tried has been fairly successful," Bryan says.

It's particularly enjoyable for the three members who haven't been on the road before: reedman Andy Mackay, electronics manipulator Eno, and Ferry himself. Ferry's responses are coloured by his experience as a painter and sculptor. "It's strange to do something and be cheered for it, when you're used to a cool reaction to anything that you've ever done before. It's much nicer this way and the audiences really do seem to appreciate the fact that we perform, rather than just play."

"We're eclectic, certainly, but it's not so much cribbing..."

BRYAN FERRY

The songs in their current repertoire come almost exclusively from the period between September 1970 and May 1971; when Bryan wrote a great deal. But now he's having trouble finding the time and space to write. "I can't work while we're on the road, and I can't write at home because I work best late at night and the neighbours go spare. What I need is a detached bungalow in Esher and a few weeks off to absorb some information from outside." Bryan recognises that life on the road can lead to the kind of introspection which manifests itself in so many supremely boring songs.

His official biography states that he names Duchamp and Warhol as two significant musical influences. Bryan thinks that it's too bald and sounds pseud and elaborate: "Someone like Picasso develops a style and then flogs it to death. Marcel Duchamp was a kind of will o' the wisp of art, lending his hand to all kinds of activity – which one would wish to emulate. Warhol's idea is to make art with as little effort as possible – he's an ideas man, really. And if you have faith in an idea, it is easy to make it happen. The main thing about our music is still its surprise. It would be terrific to have the second album sound nothing like the first. We're not the kind of band to find a formula and then stick to it. That's deathly!"

Future plans include their first single, a Ferry song called "Virginia Plain", to be produced (like the album) by Pete Sinfield, sometime this month. The song's based on one of Bryan's old paintings, in turn inspired by the cigarettes of the same name and by former Warhol superstar Baby Jane Holzer. What about success then, Bryan?

"There are so many unknown and uncontrollable factors. Most of the band have this approach of inspired amateurism, and as

"Actually, 'Would You Believe?' is the most restricting thing we do – far less satisfying than the rest – because it's a very set thing, a little cameo with no room for improvement or interesting improvising. It's very much something that we have to act through, and if we're not in the mood there's not much we can do."

But the rest of the songs abound with references back to earlier pop music – like the "quotes" on "Re-Make/Re-Model" or the Joe Meek-style production touches on "Ladytron". Ferry says: "It seems to be nice to have something which is rich in variety, and so many things from the past have been totally forgotten. It would be terrific, for instance, to have real violins on stage playing like

Blow hard: an early Roxy show with Graham Simpson at the 100 Club, London, December 1971

ROGER PERRY

Roxy Music at the Royal College Of Art video studio in London, July 5, 1972

long as we can retain that we'll be all right. The Rock Machine is quite a tough beast and very conventional. We've got to keep up the energy to question the way things are and shift them around to how we feel they should be into our overall scheme. But, at the moment, just going up and down the M1 for the first time is very enjoyable."

TAKEN FROM MELODY MAKER 29/07/1972

ALMOST a year ago to the week, Bryan Ferry sat in a council flat in Shepherd's Bush and explained his timetable for the next year. He had this band called Roxy, and he said, that they were going to make it "in as civilised a way as possible". All he wanted was the best management, the best agency, the best record company and a large bag of gold coins – and if he got them, he knew the band would be very good, and very popular.

One year later, their management is EG, their agency Chrysalis, their record company Island – and their first album's at No 29 in the *Melody Maker* chart. They're playing the best gigs (with Alice at Wembley last month, with Bowie at the Rainbow next), and in November they're off to the States. Their first single comes out this week, and if it doesn't make the chart then it'll be the first thing that's gone wrong in 12 months. For if Roxy Music go very much further, they'll be one of the great success stories of modern times.

One imagines that countless hard-gigging pros, up and down the island are swearing their heads off at the way Roxy has taken off. After all, only a couple of the band's six members have any real experience of life on the road. Dues-paying, as far as Roxy is concerned, has been virtually eliminated by a combination of imaginative excellence and intelligent strategy. And these two adjectives – imaginative and intelligent – pretty well sum up where they score over the muddy morass of mediocre pickers truckin' nightly up and down the M1.

A large part in the band's success has been played by John Peel. Who, with his producers John Muir and John Walters, has been giving them regular airtime since the very early days. They're playing at Crystal Palace this Saturday, with Edgar Winter, Osibisa, Stone The Crows and others. Doubtless many new listeners will become ardent fans through exposure to their blend of witty visual style and Ferry's strange, compelling songs. There can be little doubt that they're moving the music forward, stylistically and aesthetically, while reaffirming the strength and validity of its roots.

Bryan Ferry is wearing a somewhat distracted air these days. His album's in the chart, he's moving house, he's trying to write some new songs – too much to be taken in at once. How does it feel, Bryan? "Couldn't tell you. I feel in a complete void at the moment. Very unsettled. It'll get better when we go to the States. The travelling will be more interesting."

> **"In Newcastle, I was living with a guy who helped Warhol"**
>
> BRYAN FERRY

Facts: he comes from Durham, is 26 years old, and studied Fine Art (painting and sculpture to you) at Newcastle University. Started singing in soul bands, notably Gas Board, and then returned to painting. Won a scholarship from the Royal College Of Art exhibited his ceramics, and veered away again in the winter of 1970, when he began teaching himself to play piano, and started a period of intense writing which produced most of the music Roxy Music plays today.

Their single, "Virginia Plain" exemplifies his approach to writing, which freely criss-crosses between the visual and aural arts. It's based around a painting of the same name which he did

BRIAN COOKE/REDFERNS

Manzanera's 'Fly' sunglasses, Royal College Of Art, July 5, 1972

years ago, and which is itself a three-way pun. The name, of course, comes from a brand of American cigarettes – and the painting consists of a large cigarette pack, with the motif of a girl, placed at the end of a plain; so the cigarettes are Virginia Plain, the girl is Virginia Plain, and the plain is Virginia Plain. How it translates into the song is rather more complex. "The painting was a sort of throwaway water colour," he says, "and the song has lots of little images and throwaway lines. The painting was done in '64, and although the song was written this year, it reflects the feeling of that time – I was up in Newcastle, living with a guy who'd helped Warhol to make the Marilyn (Monroe) silkscreens. It's a whole American Dream thing, living up there yet constantly thinking about Warhol's Factory and Baby Jane Holzer. It's got some other things in it now – Vegas, Nevada, Route 66..."

The sharp-eared will doubtless catch the line: *"Baby Jane's in Acapulco – we are flying down to Rio,"* which also reflects the way Bryan can translate cinematic references to song (as he did on the album's "2 HB"). There's also a few seconds of motorbike noise – shades of 'Leader Of The Pack'.

"It's a bid to get on *Top Of The Pops* , actually... just a way to get to meet Pan's People. I think a single is necessary – after all, most of the best things in pop have been done in that medium. We've always wanted to make them, and I don't want people to think it's a cop-out – that's silly. There's nothing wrong with being commercial if it's good – like The Who and the Stones. I'd like our single to be thought of in that area."

Will it be a hit?

"It could be much stronger. We did a live version for the BBC yesterday which was full of power – thick and rough. But the record has some fine bits. Oh, I don't know what to think of things any more."

Bryan wants to make their second album much quicker and cheaper than the first – which itself wasn't expensive to make. "We'll just do a couple of takes on each number to get a 'live' sound. That's what interests me... there weren't enough mistakes on the first album. It'll be much wilder." He's frustrated by the fact that he can't hear properly what they sound like on stage... "and people say we're much better live than on record. I never expected that – I always expected that we'd be a recording band, really. But I'm really pleased about it."

ANDY MACKAY would have made a great hipster, had he been born a quarter of a century earlier. Almost over-endowed with cool, he'd have been great in a zoot suit and a naked lady tie. As things are, Andy adds a lot to Roxy Music, in terms of style. His playing isn't secondary though as befits a fancier of King Curtis and Earl Bostic, his contributions are trenchant and memorable. He began his musical life as a teenage oboeist playing in the London Schools Symphony Orchestra, and didn't take up the saxophone until he went to Reading University where he took a pleasant course which combined Music with English Literature (How? "Old English madrigals."). Unusually for a reedman, he had no jazz influence whatever and played in a college soul band called Nova Express, as well as joining the university orchestra. He also became heavily involved in avant-garde music and began to organise concerts with guest artists from London. Among his influences at this time were Morton Feldman and John Cage.

Leaving in '68, he hung around London for a while before splitting to the East, which was the obligatory thing to do that year." Coming back he worked at odd jobs before leaving again, this time for Italy. He stayed a year, practising and writing music, and teaching English. On returning, he met Bryan in January '71.

"I knew I had to be a musician, and I wanted to be a rock musician. I suppose I could've been a classical oboeist, but it didn't seem free enough; and I couldn't have supported myself by playing electronic music – also the audience is limited. The only way I could be a musician was in rock, but with people who had a lot of ideas. The way we tackled it... we could have gone on the road and played all the colleges, but very early on we decided to do it the other way, to do only what we wanted. Being on the road for the first time is great – I haven't enjoyed myself so much in years."

Andy is very much involved in the band's visual style. "Last year I'd have been very surprised to find that what we're doing now is so much in fashion. It seemed very remote then – but now, it's a feeling that's around that we happen to represent. We'd got it all worked out by the middle of last year, so it's not just something we've jumped on all of a sudden. If the single is a success we'll attract different kinds of audiences and we'll be freer to do more things. Already there's pressure, as people are expecting certain things, from us. I just hope it's pressure to come up with creative ideas."

While the rest of the band were mixing the B-side of the new single, Eno was sitting in the

BRIAN COOKE/REDFERNS

Dressed to thrill: a photoshoot at Brian Cooke's studio, west London, September 18, 1972

BRIAN COOKE/REDFERNS

control booth with a set of logtables, a notebook, and a rapidly blunting pencil. "I woke up this morning," quoth he, "with a theory about prime numbers." The column of numbers in the notebook grew apace.

With stripey-dyed hair and pallid maquillage, Eno operates the band's synthesiser, prepared tapes, and other electronic aids. He also does a nifty line in back-up vocals. Having spent his early years near a USAF base, his interest in rock is long-term ("We used to get the new American records from the PX stores.") At art school in Ipswich in the mid-'60s, he discovered the properties of the common domestic tape recorder – and within three or four years, had amassed no less than 30 such devices.

"I realised that there were certain areas of music you could enter without actually learning an instrument, which at my age I certainly wasn't about to do." At Winchester School of Art between 1966 and '69, he made himself president of the Students' Union and spent the union funds on hiring prestigious avant-garde musicians to come and lecture – mostly to himself. He also collaborated with some of the famous men: Cornelius Cardew, Christian Wolff, John Tilbury, Morton Feldman. Influenced by Cardew's piece called "School Time Composition", Cage's book *The Anarchy Of Silence* and the Systems artists ("Their emphasis is on the procedures rather than the end product"), he was brought to Reading University to lecture by one Andrew Mackay. Some years later, when Andy had just met Bryan, Andy and Eno bumped into each other on the Tube and Eno was invited to join the group, playing Andy's VCS3 synthesiser. Now he uses four tape machines at home, transferring the results to an Ampex cassette machine for gigs. Soon he'll be getting a new synthesiser, incorporating a memory circuit which will retain any sequence of notes, up to 256 in fact. It'll also have various custom devices including phasers and phase shifters and "a device which gives the effect of quad in two speakers – honest!" He's also about to acquire a special long-delay echo unit, which will delay its repeat by anything up to 15 minutes.

"At the moment, I'm mostly interested in modifying the sound of the other instruments. You get a nice quality – the skill of the performer, transformed by the electronics. Neither the player nor I know what each other is going to do – which means you get some nice accidents."

Apart from possessing one of the finest drum-kits I've ever seen, Paul Thompson was, until the arrival of Rik Kenton, the only member of Roxy Music to have been through the rock'n'roll mill, and the only one to whom life on the road wasn't something of a shock.

Like Bryan, Paul is from Newcastle and started playing before he left school. He worked in a shipyard for a year, and then played with various bands – The Influence, Yellow and Smokestack among them. He came down to London with Smokestack early last year. "But it fell to bits after a while, and I went back home and did nothing."

His determination rebuilt, he returned to London a few months later and worked on a building site while looking around for a band.

He and Roxy Music met each other through an ad in the *MM*. "Wonder drummer required for avant-rock group," it said, and after an audition he was in. On the face of it, it doesn't seem to be the kind of band any self-respecting heavy funk merchant would want to be associated with. Not, In fact, drummers' music.

"But I'm not into drummers' music," says Paul. "I'm into group music, something that comes out of a unit. I'd never played anything like it before, but I'd always wanted to do something out of the ordinary. I can't stand the heavy bands that just play riffs – only Led Zeppelin are good enough to get away with it. I try to play melodically as well as rhythmically, and I try to create my own licks. For instance, when drummers go right round the kit, they almost always do it clockwise. It seems to be the natural way. So I sometimes try it anti-clockwise – and it sounds really interesting."

At first, Paul was rather reticent about wearing make-up and strange garb on stage, having been brought up in the jeans and sweatshirt school. "I

Mackay and Eno on stage on Roxy's first UK tour, 1972

was a bit reluctant at first, because I'm basically shy, but I've lost that as the group's got better known. With all the other bands I've been in, when we walked on stage nothing happened. With Roxy Music, the audience takes notice right away. There's an immediate impact."

PHIL MANZANERA'S association with Roxy Music began when he was invited to become the group's sound-mixer. Soon afterwards he replaced David O'List – and his bejewelled shades are now an integral part of the group's teen-appeal. Born in London, he spent his childhood moving between Cuba, Hawaii and Venezuela, which ensured that he was exposed to the youth culture of North America.

"The first 45 I ever had was 'Teenager In Love'," he says. "I was brainwashed, and I've never recovered. I used to watch all the old *Shindig* shows on TV, and I started playing guitar when I was 12 – 'Wipe Out' and things like that. Nothing too difficult. I was completely swept up by the Beatles/Stones thing. That provided a lot of the impetus for me."

He came back to Britain to go to Dulwich College, and formed a group with bassist Bill MacCormick and drummer Charles Hayward. It was the psychedelic era, so they became known as Quiet Sun with a heavy Soft Machine influence, because Bill's mother knew Robert Wyatt's mother, and they were into the Softs right from the "Love Makes Sweet Music" single. "When we got Dave Jarratt in on keyboards, we started experimenting with time a lot. But it fizzled out – no interest from outside, and no work." MacCormick, of course, is now with Wyatt's Matching Mole.

Phil auditioned for Roxy through the famous *MM* ad that also attracted Paul Thompson, but the band was looking for O'List and found him. Phil saw them play at a party, though, and was still interested – so they planned that he should mix their sound on gigs. He'd never done it before, and was completely baffled by the mixing equipment – but fortunately O'List left in time and Phil was invited to join.

His influences on guitar were originally George Harrison and Chuck Berry – more recently, Randy California and Lou Reed and Jimi Hendrix. "McLaughlin's not an influence – because at a certain point I decided I'd never reach that stage of technical ability. Roxy Music fits in with my ideas of playing guitar, and with my limitations. I think people are getting fed up with long guitar solos, because very few people can maintain that level of creativity for any period of time – those who can are mostly playing jazz anyway. Perhaps after playing with Quiet Sun for a long time, I'm just reacting the opposite way – getting into songs and simple rock'n'roll music. I like to be economical, and I'd rather play two bars of something nice than half an hour of something mediocre."

> **"Roxy Music fits in with my limitations"**
>
> **PHIL MANZANERA**

Rik Kenton's role, as Roxy's bassist, is generally to mesh with Paul Thompson's drums to provide a tough, tight platform over which the instrumental lunacies of the frontline can stretch unworried. Rik started off playing organ and guitar in Nottingham about five years ago, playing with local bands like Woody Kern. It was mostly soul music and jazzy blues, until he came to London in '69 to audition for a band called Mouseproof, on bass for the first time. "That band wasn't too far away from what's happening now," he says. "The guy was into tapes and stuff, but he wanted a three-piece band and it wasn't that successful. I played with them for a long time – their manager was Jack DeJohnette's brother-in-law, by the way."

From Mouseproof he joined Armada, meeting crazed American tenorist Gary Windo – "who taught me a lot about the technology of music. Just playing with him was an experience – he's quite a musician." Armada was another-jazz influenced outfit, and through meeting various new friends, including ex-Crimson drummer Mike Giles, Rik began to get into the aspects of bass playing exemplified by the great Richard Davis. The band lasted 18 months, and then he met Leigh Stevens, formerly leader and guitarist with the American prototype heavy band Blue Cheer. "Leigh was a big influence because he was a side of rock that I'd never met before. I played with him for about three months – we didn't do any gigs, though. It was hard to get on because Leigh didn't seem to want to, and although he's very talented, he didn't have any confidence. That finished last Christmas, and although I did a lot of auditions, I couldn't really find what I was after. Eventually I got together with Roxy through knowing Pete Sinfield and the people around the King Crimson scene. I'd heard the album, and I liked Bryan's songs and voice, and Andy's oboe-playing. So when Graham left, I joined!'

Nerve-rackingly, his first gig with them was at the Lincoln Festival on May 27. "Being on the road has given the band a lot of soul," he says. "From the outside it may not look like a musicians' band, but it is – in fact,it gives me a lot of scope, because the music varies so much and I'm called on to do a lot of different things. There are four lead instruments, so I have to be careful not to overplay when I'm supposed to be laying down a rhythm feel, but at other times there may be only me and Phil playing. As Bryan gets more confident on piano, it'll loosen up even more!'

He's a great admirer of melodic bass players – McCartney, some of Jack Bruce's work, and the Motown sessionmen in particular. "I keep making discoveries about the Motown guys. A lot of bassists forget about dynamics – for instance, that the pinnacle of a phrase should be louder than the rest. It's also something to do with playing near the bottom of the fretboard, to give it a certain depth."

Rik believes that Roxy's greatest strength is its all-encompassing attitude. "In Bryan's voice, we've got something that's identifiable straight away so we haven't got to keep the music straight in order to retain a 'Roxy sound'. That's one of the reasons why there's plenty of room for the band to grow. It's very stimulating."

Performing live on the BBC's *Full House*, November, 25, 1972

FIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS, DAVID REDFERN/REDFERNS

ARCHIVE 1972

"LIKE A BEAUTIFUL DREAM"

NME catches up with Roxy Music in locations both glamorous and not. First, with their lead guitarist at 20,000 feet and then with their singer – recuperating in hospital after a tonsillectomy. "I may never sing again," BRYAN FERRY tells IAN MACDONALD. "But I can't promise anything…"

TAKEN FROM NME 23/09/1972

THE champagne was flowing freely when I interviewed Phil Manzanera, guitaring personality of Roxy Music, in freefall at 20,000 feet over the English Channel last Friday. The drab reality is that Bryan Ferry's in hospital with tonsillitis and the group have a lay-off to add to their recent fortnight's holiday on the Continent.

"It's our summer recess," Manzanera explained, brushing the Moët bubbles out of his beard. "We're going to spend the next four to five weeks playing about with the ideas the rest of us have got, irrespective of whether we eventually utilise them or not. We just want to get used to playing with each other, really. I mean, we rehearsed the album, recorded it, rehearsed the set, and went on the road and I still haven't been introduced to the drummer."

Are you doing any composing?

"I've been writing mostly instrumental music for the past two years and, towards the end, it seemed to be getting almost too easy. I'd be sitting at my piano, trying things out, and ideas would suddenly come to me out of nowhere. My hands would become possessed and dance up and down the keyboard, even. But, recently I've been trying to get back to doing simple songs and I've been round at Eno's working things out. I always prefer writing with other people – otherwise I tend to get complacent. Andy's doing a lot of stuff too."

"I saw an ad: 'Wanted: tricky dick freak-out guitarist'"
PHIL MANZANERA

Who has the final say on what gets performed?

"We all agree most of the time. Bryan's usually right about his things. If it was left up to me and Andy we'd probably make arrangements a bit too flashy, we've both been involved in fairly intricate music in the past. Bryan's self-taught on the piano; he keeps everything nice and simple, thank God. If he was classically trained, he'd probably be sticking in bits of Bach or whatever. I prefer listening to Bryan play than a lot of quite famous pianists actually.

There've only been a couple of people I've really believed in musically, one's Bryan, and the other is Paul Wheeler, who's completely unknown at the moment, but who's one of the best songwriters in England. I'm really amazed no-one's snapped him up yet. And David Bowie's songs I like a lot too. His management were rather disagreeable at the Rainbow, but Bowie and The Spiders are very nice people and I enjoyed what they were doing."

Over a further glass of champagne I asked Manzanera what he'd been up to before he joined Roxy.

"I was in a band called Quiet Sun which did complicated music and never really got anywhere. Bill MacCormick, who's in Matching Mole, started it with me – and

BRIAN COOKE/REDFERNS

Phil Manzanera, west London, September 1972

Playback in London, 1972, including (l-r) Andy Mackay, producer Chris Thomas (at desk), Paul Thompson (back centre), Brian Eno and Bryan Ferry

GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/REDFERNS

Charlie Hayward was the drummer. He's now playing with Daevid Allen's Gong in France. Anybody who runs a struggling unknown group knows how soul-destroying all the phoning around agencies bit is, and eventually we just got fed up with it. Just after Bill left I saw an ad in the back of a music paper saying 'Wanted: tricky dick freak-out guitarist' or something. I'd just started a boring temporary job at Clarkson's Travel Agency, so I thought I'd have a try. When I went round and heard Bryan's tapes I was knocked out. The minute I heard them, I told him I thought they were going to be really big – and he probably thought: God, what a greasy freak. Anyway, we jammed a bit – on some Carole King numbers actually, which was an amazing relief after Quiet Sun, where we were playing, insane 17/8 things at ridiculous speeds all the time. I rediscovered my melodic sense in a word – but in the meantime they'd hired David O'List."

"Some weeks later I got a phone-call at Clarkson's from Bryan who wanted me to come and do the group's mixing, because their guy'd left. So I went round to this dug-out ex-house in Notting Hill Gate, having never been near a mixer in my life, and got on with it. I used to go there every evening and there were guitars lying around, etcetera, etcetera, and, one day they told me they were thinking of getting a new guitarist, so I did yet another audition which turned out to be the longest I've ever played. Lasted about three days. And then they said yes and I joined at exactly the right time, because all the hassling about contracts had been done by then and I didn't have to go through the Quiet Sun thing again. Of course, Bryan had been doing it for well over a year."

> **"Eno was playing synth as if it were a plate of Biryani"**
> PHIL MANZANERA

Have some more champagne and tell me about the way you play. How do you approach soloing, for instance?

"It really depends on what I get given to do. Frequently the group go into the studio to do a new number without telling me how it goes so that I'll play with the spontaneity they like. Like for 'Virginia Plain' I got into the studio and set up my amp and the time was getting closer and closer to my solo and I still hadn't the faintest idea what I was going to do. And the break arrived and I just went blam! I mean, I could've put my fingers anywhere. I've since tried to reproduce it and I can't work it out at all."

"That was an amazing session. We were all capering around in there during 'The Numberer' shouting silly things which had to be edited out. In fact, ever since I've joined Roxy I've been having an amazing time. Like a beautiful dream."

He pauses to refill his glass.

"On the album I got the chance to prepare some stuff beforehand on my Revox, but even then a lot of it was improvised on the spot. On 'Chance Meeting' they wanted me to play backwards, or rather play forwards while the tape went backwards. When that failed dismally I tried feedback which meant playing so loud I couldn't hear Bryan singing, only the chord changes. Eno likes that a lot – randomness. Taping one track and then sticking another one over the top without listening to the first one. And with 'Chance Meeting' it was singularly appropriate."

The group seems to have loosened up recently, got a lot less serious about the stage act. (Pass the bottle).

"Well we're not solemn about our music. We like to give people a good show, dress up and that sort of thing. Have a laugh. And, though we still make mistakes, we believe in them as much as the things we carefully plan. After all, if you make mistakes with enough conviction, people are bound to like you. Towards the end of our last tour, things were getting very silly indeed. Eno had a giant pair of plastic knives and forks and was playing the synthesiser as if it were a plate of biryani or something. But it's natural and, although as a group we tend to laugh a lot, we don't believe in hammering phoney humour. In fact we play rather badly if we're giggling. So, if everybody's in high spirits in the dressing room we usually have to insult each other before we go on stage. All our best gigs have happened when we've been in filthy tempers."

With the champagne running low, I decided to open the conversation out, probe Manzanera's extra-musical proclivities. Where's your head at, man?

"About 45° at the moment," he quipped, looking unsteadily at an empty glass. "Well, I've seen a lot of films lately. We all went to see *Hello Dolly* on the Continent and it's got an amazing dance routine in a restaurant. I'm really into tap-dancing like *The Black And White Minstrel Show*. I was watching it the other night and they had all these different coloured pigeons flying about. That'll probably drop tip in Roxy's stage act sometime."

Is this where the band's exotic stage movements come from?

"Oh, they're very simple, though we do tend to

Into the red: during the band's first UK tour, 1972

bump into each other now and then. One night Andy had something on his mind and forgot where he was, and I found myself mincing about on my own. I felt such a fool. And another time we got entwined in our leads and couldn't get out - stuff like that. But it's all experience and that's what life's all about, isn't it?"

Any view I might have held on this topic was nullified by Manzanera's subsequent decline into a profound slumber. On reflection, he may have something, but the question remains: Is Roxy Music really the sort of example we wish to set our parents? All contributions will be gratefully received.

TAKEN FROM NME 14/10/1972

BRYAN FERRY, stunning in gold trimmed black pyjamas and matching shades, greeted me from where he reclined, half-submerged beneath a heap of scented fanmail, on the Louis Quinze four poster of his private wing in an exclusive and secluded Swiss Health resort last week.

Having already scooped an unexpected and revealing tête-à-tête with Princess Grace of Monaco (recovering, in the adjoining suite, from a mild attack of Sovereign's Limp Wrist incurred through overgenerous acknowledgement of her subjects' homage), I was well set-up to take advantage of Ferry's incapacity by dissecting the Roxy Music myth with half-a-dozen deft strokes of that verbal scalpel which made me the toast of Bloomsbury in my younger day. I began by suavely enquiring after the condition of his newly amputated tonsils.

"I feel fine," replied Ferry, evasively. "I may never sing again, but I can't promise anything."

But how stands the wind, I enquired, for another single? He squirmed, visibly. I sneered.

"We're not a singles group really," said he. "I certainly don't want to find myself sliding down that Slade/T.Rex corridor of horror. We might release another one at Christmas, providing we've got strong enough material – I've got some numbers in the pipeline, and one of them might well make a good single eventually; it's a ballad called 'Beauty Queen' and will be grandiose and heavy in the Walker Brothers' tradition."

HAD he heard that his underlings in Roxy were plotting musical insurrection in his absence?

"I'll knock 'em into shape when I get out. As soon as these crooning tubes are repaired, we're all going to be working like mad, putting together a short set of fast numbers for the States in December. It's a drag about this throat, because I'd like to have gone and done something in Holland and Belgium for a month. I see the album and the single are doing well over there. And I imagine we might score heavily in Paris.... there being a certain chicness in our ensemble which the French would appreciate."

At this point, Simon Puxley, PR for EG, DFC and bar, entered bearing a bottle-shaped burden bewrapped in burlap, and I realised it was going to be the dreaded champagne scene, again. Cardinal Biggles – the soft cushions! All my veiled intentions of extracting a confession from a spavined Ferry were thus thwarted and, from this moment on, things began to get silly.

"I think the second album," announced Bryan, in reply to one of my last sensible questions, "ought to be the same numbers in the same order as the first, but done in a different studio. The cover would be KariAnn one year older, and trying to adopt the same pose. And each year we'd do the same numbers, and the lines would start appearing on her face, and the times of the tracks would be a few seconds out. Norris McWhirter would start checking us for world records: This year they've got "Re-make/ Re-model" down to two minutes forty five! How far can this band go?"

"Eno wants a press-release that says he's turning to sport – so that it'll emerge in the *NME* that he's quitting the business to go into training for the 1973 Commonwealth Games. Another idea is that, since Roxy have done all that could be expected, they should just drop the whole thing and go off and do something else – like climbing the Eiger. Or forming a four-by-one-hundred metres relay team, and a couple of trainers."

"Yes," Ferry nodded, "totally unofficial, and nothing to do with the British team – but much faster. We'd appear at special Pop Athletics concerts. The previous group would finish and then a starter would fire a gun and we'd all come belting on, tear across the stage, and off the other side. We would revitalise the youth of England make them stop spending so much of their time listening to music, and get into training instead. I think it'd be much more interesting if the *NME* ran a poll to find out musicians' favourite track and field events." He paused, briefly, to wink at a nice lady who'd just brought his lunch in for him. "Or we could all take the cloth and become Italian bishops, Or bogus faith-healers. Do you want a banana, by the way? I can't eat these."

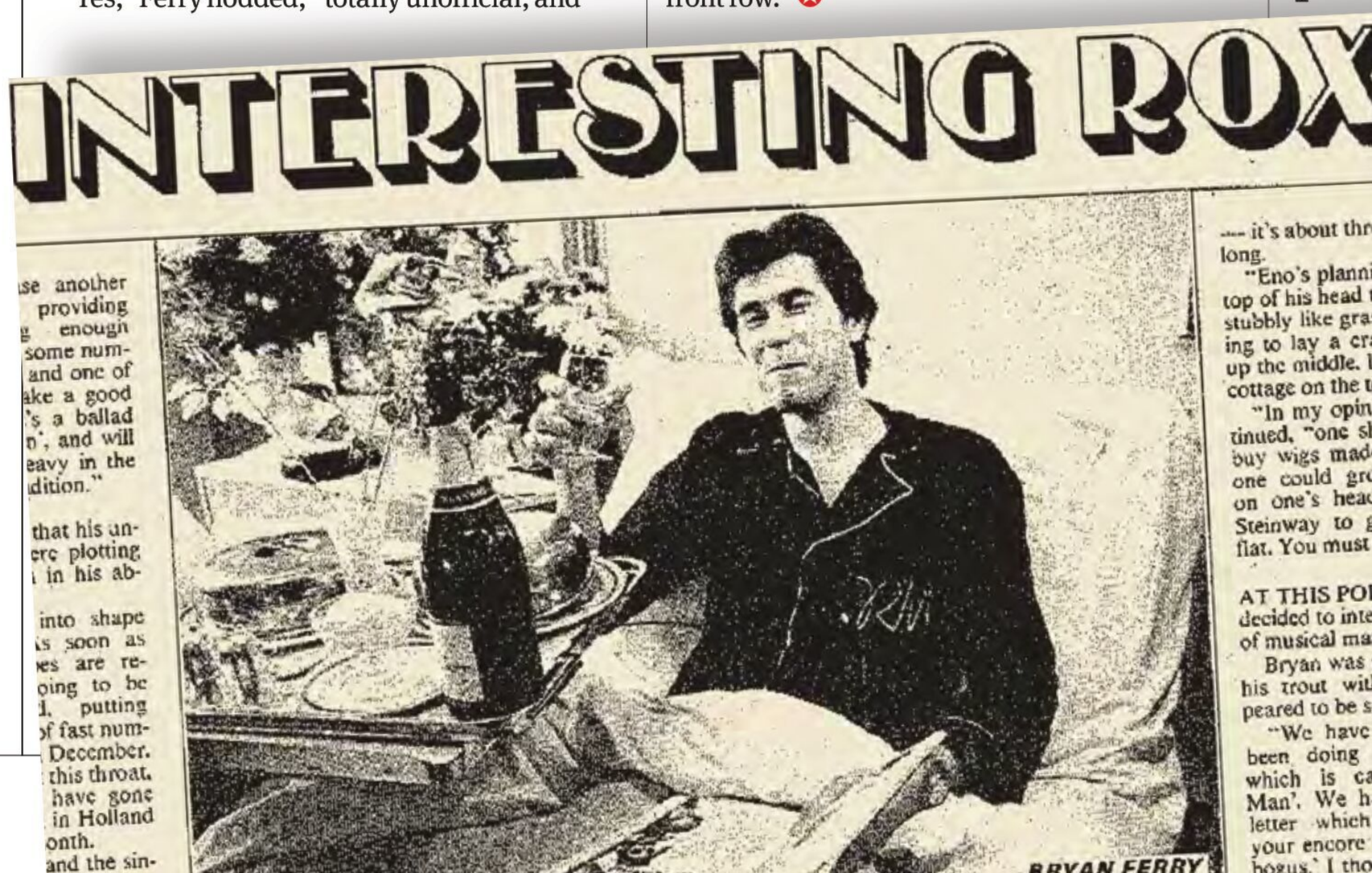
"I've just been reading *The Carpetbaggers* again. I'm tipping Harold Robbins for the greatest writer of all time, including Shakespeare. It's a terrific book. All human life is there. It ought to be – it's about three million pages long. Eno's planning to shave the top of his head till it's short and stubbly like grass then he's going to lay a crazy-paving path up the middle, leading to a cottage on the top. In my opinion," Ferry continued, "one should be able to buy wigs made of soil so that one could grow rock-gardens on one's head. I'm renting a Steinway to go into my new flat. You must come around."

AT this point in his tirade I decided to interrupt and enquire of musical matters. Bryan was sceptically poking his trout with a fork. It appeared to be still alive. "We have a number we've been doing in our stage-act which is called 'The Bogus Man'. We had this great fan letter which finished, 'I like your encore very much. It was bogus'. I thought that was very funny."

Seizing at this slender straw I broached the subject of Roxy's live performances. Had their attitude to the audience, once distant and self-effacing, been altered over the months by the warmth of the receptions they'd been getting?

"Very much, yes. Once, we started getting a bit of fan-mail and a few encores, we loosened up considerably, and I don't think were scared of audiences anymore. At The Rainbow we were getting fantastic feedback from the audience, and I really enjoyed it. Particularly Sunday night. There was a beautiful girl in the front row."

FIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS



40 BEST GLAM SINGLES

Roxy Music backstage at the Crystal Palace Garden Party, London, July 29, 1972: (l–r) Paul Thompson, Bryan Ferry, Brian Eno, Phil Manzanera, Rik Kenton and Andy Mackay

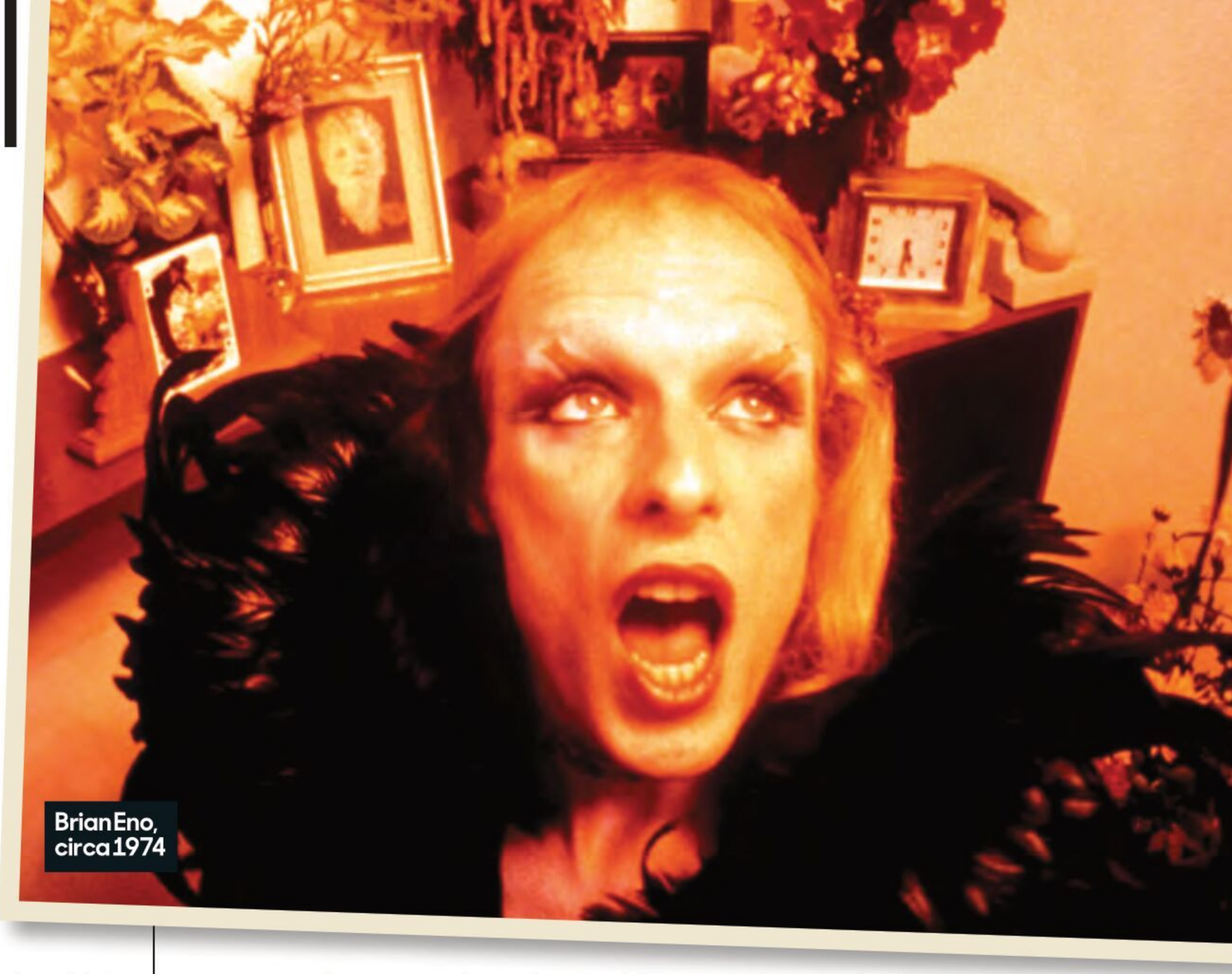
THE TOP 40 GLAM ROCK SINGLES

Uncut's 2018 pick of the best 7"s from Roxy ("a 25th century glam band") and their contemporaries.

By **DAVID CAVANAGH**

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

40 BEST GLAM SINGLES


Brian Eno, circa 1974

ONCE upon a time, when glam rock was sweeping Britain, it cost 50p to join the revolution. That was the price of a 7-inch single in 1973. Fifty pence bought you a ticket to the ball; a piece of Slade, T.Rex or Mott The Hoople; a physical product (as they say nowadays) of a pop phantasmagoria in all the colours of the rainbow; as disposable or as durable as you wished.

An all-day mainstay on Radio 1, that piece of black vinyl might have been released earlier in the week, or it might have already spent two months in the charts. Glam singles didn't just give us a quick twirl; they Had It and they Flaunted It. You could, if you timed it right, snap up two Suzi Quatro singles on the same late-July day for a knockdown price of 75p, just as "Can The Can" was leaving the Top 40 and "48 Crash" was storming into it. You could gaze longingly at other singles in the shop, mesmerised by the alien-looking Bowie on the picture sleeve of "Life On Mars?", sorely tempted by the familiar red CBS label of Mott's "Honaloochie Boogie", and seductively beckoned like Ulysses by the ship's mast on the pale blue RAK label of Mud's "Hypnosis". There was no immediate hurry; there was nothing more important on earth. By the time you reached home, a new single straight from glam's magical manufacturing plant – Barry Blue's future No 2 "Dancin' (On A Saturday Night)" – was already being played on Radio 1 by Emperor Rosko. This was life, shopping for singles, choosing one to keep, coveting others.

Singles were the be-all, the end-all and the optimum glam medium for several reasons. Firstly, the fans were young, limited to a modest weekly pocket-money spend. Unable to buy albums even if they'd wanted to, they were, instead, the prime demographic for something smaller and shorter, a 7-inch souvenir of their visit to the great glam theme park that was the local record shop. Secondly, the whole point of singles going back to the '50s was that you loved to buy them, borrow them, collect them, swap them, take them out, spin them, put them back, organise them, reorganise them and cherish them.

Thirdly, in the same way that popular sitcoms during the '70s had a depressing tendency to be turned into mirthless 90-minute feature films, many glam artists were suited to the 7-inch format and nothing else. For them, the idea of coming up with a *Ziggy Stardust* or an *Aladdin Sane* was too daunting a proposition, too big an ask. Not all were as talented as David Bowie, and some weren't even as talented as David Essex. Who cared if they released albums or not? And how would we know anyway? As a result, Barry Blue's eponymous debut LP and Kenny's *The Sound Of Super K*, despite the names and faces being recognisable from TV screens and poster magazines, had very different sales curves to *Tubular Bells* and *The Dark Side Of The Moon*, while The Eagles sleep easy in their beds knowing that the 29-times-platinum *Their Greatest Hits (1971–1975)* is unlikely to be overtaken by Alvin Stardust's *Rock On With Alvin*.

The 7-inch single was glam's natural habitat, its spiritual home"

Aesthetically and economically tailor-made for inquisitive young minds, the 7-inch single was glam's natural habitat, its spiritual home, its rightful domain. It came to us on RAK and the silver Bell label. It was quality-stamped with the names of top producers like Tony Visconti (T.Rex), Chas Chandler (Slade), Phil Wainman (The Sweet), Mike Leander (Gary Glitter) and Mike Chapman/Nicky Chinn – the famous Chinnichap writing-and-production duo who minted smash hits for The Sweet, Suzi Quatro and Mud on a frantic, fantastic, week-to-week basis.

The verdict of the older generation was always derogatory. Glam, they said, was a Bolan–Bowie face-off, a brief skirmish won conclusively by the latter, after which Bowie latched onto Philly soul and left glam to the scavengers, the Mickie Mosts and the undiscriminating kids.

Let the Top 40 of glam show the evidence to the contrary. Are you ready, Steve? The court will rise.

40 QUEEN — Seven Seas Of Rhye

EMI, 1974 #10

Evil-eyed glam, debuting on *Top Of The Pops* after a Bowie no-show. But what was this? A sound both modern and medieval. Glamme rocke, verily? Lights! Camera! Androgynous drummer! Action!

39 GEORDIE — All Because Of You

EMI, 1973 #6

Future AC/DC singer Brian Johnson screeches his lungs out with macho cock-rock abandon, but Geordie's glam passport is stamped by their flashing guitars, stomping drums and air-punching hooks. Exhilarating.

38 LULU — The Man Who Sold The World

POLYDOR, 1974 #3

Lulu, a staple of 1970s BBC light entertainment, enjoyed a *Cabaret*-style glam makeover with this old Bowie tune. The man himself, producing and playing sax, gave it a *Pin Ups* sparkle.

37 ABBA — Waterloo

EPIC, 1974 #1

Björn's star-shaped guitar on Eurovision suggested that glam had reached Sweden, and the sound of "Waterloo" confirmed it. Nothing less than a Scandinavian summit meeting of Elton, Wizzard and Thunderthighs.

GAB ARCHIVE/REDFERNS

36 HELLO
Star Studded Sham

BELL, 1976 #–

A Mike Leander-produced single on Bell from a once-fancied UK quartet. Argent's Russ Ballard wrote the great galumphing tune, while the '76 date stamp gives the lyrics a bittersweet, late-to-the-party feel.

35 CHICORY TIP
Son Of My Father

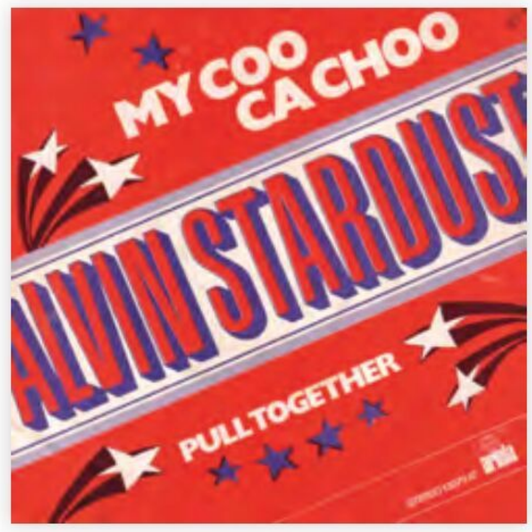
CBS, 1972 #1

Early Giorgio Moroder classic from the short-lived Anglo-German synth-glam school, with an uproarious chorus perfect for the football terraces. Don't bother deciphering the lyrics; the magic's all in the Moog.

34 LOU REED
Walk On The Wild Side

RCA, 1973 #10

The combination of double bass and smoky tenor doesn't immediately connote a Lurex-and-platform- shoes subculture, but the characters in Reed's episodic tale are exemplars of glam, even if they've all seen better days.



33 ALVIN STARDUST
My Coo Ca Choo

MAGNET, 1973 #2

Ageing opportunists could join the party, providing that behind the leather body armour and implausible sideburns there stood an ingenious conceptualist like Peter Shelley, masterminding glam's own "Spirit In The Sky".

32 KISS
Rock And Roll All Nite

CASABLANCA, 1975 #–

From the ruff, tuff, American branch of the glam family (see also Arrows) came this supercharged promise of neverending nocturnal noisiness, with a rowdy ensemble shouting out a pure Glitter Band chorus.

31 DAVID BOWIE
The Jean Genie

RCA, 1972 #2

An intellectual cut above glam's usual topics (though Jean Genet, who inspired its title, was a real-life teenage rampager), Bowie's 45rpm foretaste of *Aladdin Sane* was louche, danceable and slumped in the gutter looking at the stars.

30 10CC
Rubber Bullets

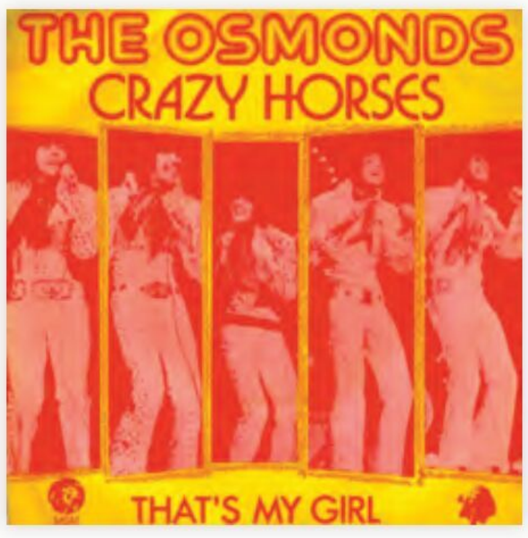
UK, 1973 #1

The cleverest men in pop mixed their beloved '50s homages with some topical firearm-related satire and produced this, a soaraway, jailhouse-rocking No 1 with superb glam guitars. No gender ambivalence in the cells, please.

29 MOTT THE HOOPLE
Honaloochie Boogie

CBS, 1973 #12

Fast-talking, chart-busting Mott in their pomp, sashaying to a joyous refrain. As for the evocatively Polynesian title, perhaps there was a faraway island where silver-haired men named Overend danced all day in giant astronaut boots?



28 THE OSMONDS
Crazy Horses

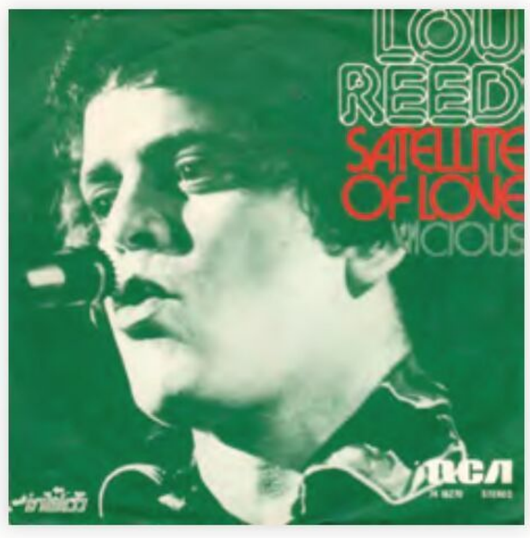
MGM, 1972 #2

Squeaky-clean image and devout religious faith notwithstanding, the toothsome Utah brothers rocked their tails off on this high-energy screamer, leading one to wonder if Mormonism's gain was glam metal's loss.

27 SUZI QUATRO
48 Crash

RAK, 1973 #3

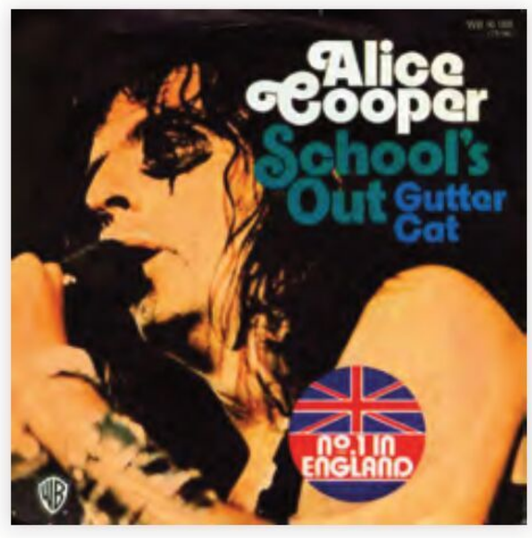
Banshee-hollering glam from Chinn-Chapman's favourite gal. Legend has it Chapman did it for a bet, challenged by a pal to write a song about the impact of the 1848 European economic crisis on the silk trade.



26 LOU REED
Satellite Of Love

RCA, 1973 #–

Reed's second 45 from *Transformer*, while not as profitable as eyebrow-plucking Holly and her ilk, is one of glam's most heavenly ballads. Bowie's backing vocals on the ritzy choruses and coda are outstanding.



25 ALICE COOPER
School's Out

WARNER BROTHERS, 1972 #1

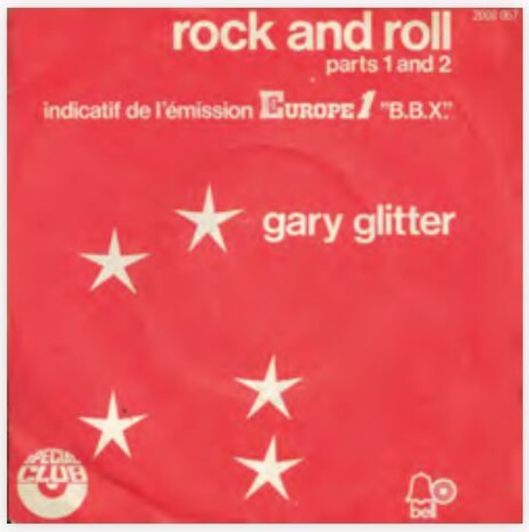
Glam singles were empowerment anthems for those resenting their uniforms. Cooper's fundamental adolescent fantasy – schools locked, teachers vanquished – spoke meaningfully to pocket-sized James Deans everywhere.

40 BEST GLAM SINGLES

24 SLADE
Mama Weer All Crazee Now

POLYDOR, 1972 #1

The pick of Slade's '72 hot streak of boot-stomping bruisers encapsulated two eternal glam themes – we're going crazy, and there's lots of us – in a thrilling din of gung-ho guitars.



23 GARY GLITTER
Rock And Roll

BELL, 1972 #2

Glitter is rightly reviled for his crimes, but let's not be Orwellian with the revisionism. His pre-downfall glam hits are good fun, presciently reductive and – as per this single's instrumental *Part 2* – downright proto-Berlin Trilogy.

22 THE GLITTER BAND
Angel Face

BELL, 1974 #4

The Leander-produced debut by Glitter's backing group combined several of his trademarks: mechanical handclaps, shouts of *"Hey!"*, a twin-drummer attack and a fuzzed-up merger of sax and guitar. (Star-shaped, of course.)

21 ELTON JOHN
Saturday Night's Alright For Fighting

DJM, 1973 #7

Not every Elton single was a glam one, but there was no denying the credentials of this boozed-up testimonial to gaudy nights, glad rags and boot-boy thuggery. Funny to think it followed "Daniel".

20 MUD
Tiger Feet

RAK, 1974 #1

A guitarist in a cocktail dress surrounded by three Teddy boys, Mud proved to be the ideal recipients for Chinn-Chapman's most gregarious super-smash, a fun-loving party song with pan-generational appeal.

19 WIZZARD
See My Baby Jive

HARVEST, 1973 #1

Like a glam Phil Spector, Roy Wood built a towering Wall Of Sound, performed this nostalgic teen epic on *Top Of The Pops* with multicoloured hair and a star painted on his forehead, and spent a month at No 1.

18 ROXY MUSIC
Street Life

ISLAND 1973, #9

Exit the synth operator with the peacock feathers. Enter a no-less-glamorous Roxy, dashing from pavement to penthouse, shoehorning endless debonair one-liners into the breathless reportage of "Street Life".

17 THE SWEET
Block Buster!

RAK, 1973 #1

The Sweet's immortal chart-topper, as cartoonishly suspenseful as a villain-unveiling in *Scooby-Doo*, has filled disco floors for four-and-a-half decades. Timeless or not, they were glam's perennial bridesmaids after this, always stuck at No 2.

16 COCKNEY REBEL
Judy Teen

EMI, 1974 #5

An ode to flamboyance written by an arrogant young Steve Harley, whose arch vocal mannerisms gave it a Carmen Miranda quality, "Judy Teen" co-starred a pizzicato violin and sounded wonderfully decadent on daytime radio.

15 QUEEN
Killer Queen

EMI, 1974 #2

Queen's high-society belle, like Cockney Rebel's impulsive bohemian, lives up to her hyperbole. And even if Moët and caviar have replaced mascara and eyeliner on her shopping list, she's still glam through and through.

14 NEW YORK DOLLS
Trash

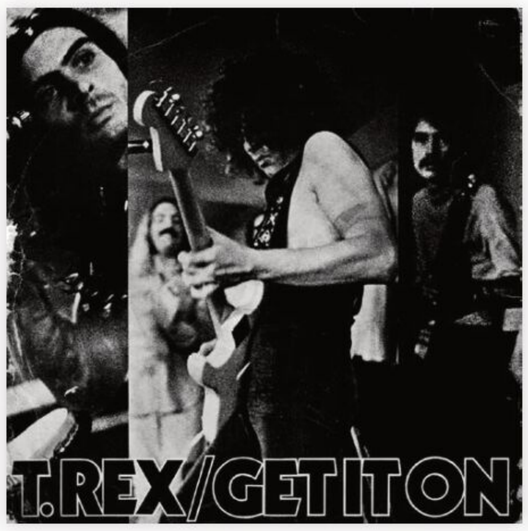
MERCURY, 1973 #–

No decadence or high society here. "Trash" is glam at the sharp end: the street-level, Sid-and-Nancy fuck-ups who huddle together for protection and can't remember why they fell in love in the first place.

13 SUZI QUATRO
Can The Can

RAK, 1973 #1

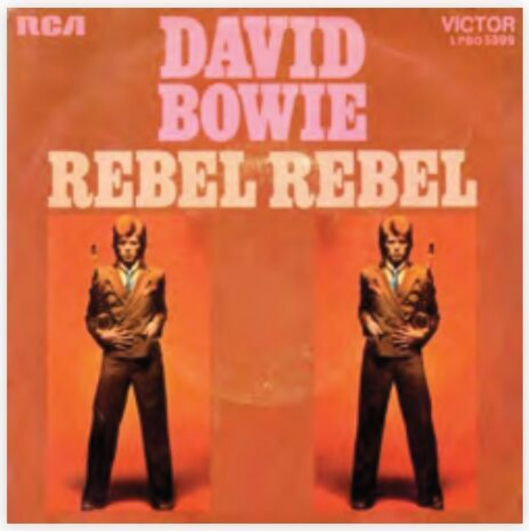
A bass-playing bombshell in a leather catsuit, Quatro hit the jackpot on the glam fruit machine, signing to RAK's hit factory, buddying up with Chinn-Chapman and screaming this girl-power anthem all the way to No 1.



12 T.REX
Get It On

FLY, 1971 #1

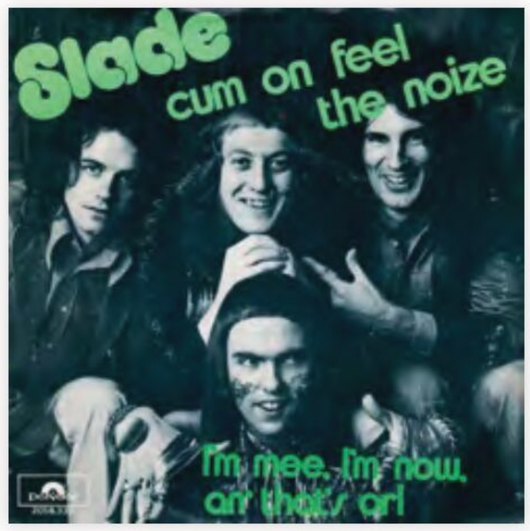
Bolan's hippie army of Tyrannosaurus Rex fans loathed "Get It On", feeling the woodland pixie had sold out. Of course he had! For fame, glitter, top hats, pink feather boas and great choogling riffs like this one.



11 DAVID BOWIE
Rebel Rebel

RCA, 1974 #5

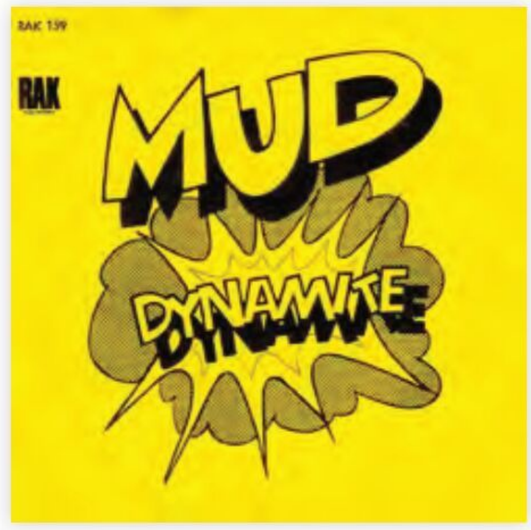
It's glam's ultimate premise: a teenager so über-androgynous that not even their mother can tell what gender they are. Bowie's closest song to "Trash", perhaps, but its strutting lyrics and hooks make it a celebration not a confrontation.



10 SLADE
Cum On Feel The Noize

POLYDOR, 1973 #1

No glam singles compilation would dare show its star-painted face without Noddy Holder's teeth-rattling exhortation to grab the boys and feel the noize. Somehow being asked by Van Morrison to feel the silence just isn't the same.



9 MUD
Dyna-Mite

RAK, 1973 #4

Before "Tiger Feet", Mud sang weird songs about girls with paranormal powers and messed-up minds. "Dyna-Mite", a Chinn-Chapman monster, had one of glam's defining riffs and turned Mud into serious players.

8 THE SWEET
The Ballroom Blitz

RCA, 1973 #2

Chinn-Chapman traced the links from '70s glam hysteria back to seat-slashing violence in the '50s, while bizarre vocal melodramatics attacked from all sides. Comical at times, but as frenzied as a razor-boy carve-up.

7 LOU REED
Vicious

RCA, 1973 #–

Not a Top 40 charter, but Reed's third single from *Transformer* was swaggering, bitchy, Warholian, Bowie-produced, saturated in Mick Ronson guitars and almost certainly bisexual. It was a glam hit all right.

6 SPARKS
This Town Ain't Big Enough For Both Of Us

ISLAND, 1974 #2

Ron Mael stole the limelight with his Hitler-moustache twitchiness on TV, but the panicky voice of brother Russell commanded Sparks' breakthrough hit, fussing around as the guitars slashed and sizzled.

5 T.REX
20th Century Boy

EMI, 1973 #3

Bolan was the first glam star to peak (and, some contend, rapidly plummet), but not before unleashing this magnificent recapitulation of the T.Rex mission statement. A last imperious victory lap before the fall.

4 ROXY MUSIC
Virginia Plain

ISLAND, 1972 #4

A 25th-century glam band by way of Bogart's Hollywood and the pages of *Elle*, Roxy presented their stunning debut single as a rock'n'roll cigarette ad – panoramic, glossy and game-changing.

3 DAVID BOWIE
Starman

RCA, 1972 #10

The Ziggy fable pictured glam as a sci-fi New Testament, and its irresistible advance single, a euphoric call-to-arms, was the message to the flock that the rock'n'roll Saviour was coming.

2 THE SWEET
The Six Teens

RCA, 1974 #9

The pathos of departure is not a concept usually associated with glam's dress-up escapism, but a sense of growing up and moving on pervades Sweet's poignant farewell to youth, innocence and Chinn-Chapman.

1 MOTT THE HOOPLE
All The Young Dudes

CBS, 1972 #3

Bowie's career-saving hit for Mott was a soliloquy, a street rap, a London love-letter and an existential scream from a new generation. Handclaps, hipster jive, hope and disillusion. A glam hymn forever.

ROXY MUSIC

FOR YOUR PLEASURE

RELEASED: MARCH 23, 1973

Embracing glam's superficiality, Roxy blow up like a suburban sex doll. Cue a grapple for the spotlight and the first – and last – Eno-era classic. **BY STEPHEN DEUSNER**

"IN Every Dream Home A Heartache", the palpitating heart of Roxy Music's second album, is surely one of the oddest anthems of the glam era. All omen and menace, it thrums with a drone of white noise, like a television left on long after the broadcast day has ended. Bryan Ferry recites the lyrics rather than crooning them, delivering an eerie monologue about an "*open-plan living, bungalow ranch-style home*". He peoples the empty rooms with a narrator and his "*disposable darling*", which turns out to be a sex doll whose "*skin is like vinyl*". After declaring, "*I blew up your body*", he pauses for a bit and sends the song careening in a new direction: "*but you blew my mind*". Phil Manzanera takes over with a majestic prog guitar solo that flanges from one speaker to the other, and the band rock harder and more desperately than seems possible. Just when you think it's over, just when you think Side One has wound down to its tormented conclusion, "In Every Dream Home..." fades in again, reminding us that these dreams and heartaches follow us from home to home, from lover to lover.

The song is, somehow, both harrowing and casually hilarious, an unusual tune from a band that for a while cultivated its eccentricities along with a barbed sense of humour. Perhaps that inflatable lover is intended to resemble Amanda Lear, briefly Ferry's paramour, who appears on the cover of *For Your Pleasure* in a black, skin-tight vinyl dress. Another connection was confirmed by Ferry in later interviews, in which he explained that he based the song's curious title on the work of famed pop artist Richard Hamilton. He not only skewed consumerist culture on his canvases, but also mentored Ferry in art at Newcastle University prior to the founding of Roxy Music. "In Every Dream Home..." sounds like Ferry has stepped into one of his teacher's collages, perhaps even Hamilton's famous 1956 work, *Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes So Different, So Appealing?*. Perhaps everything – the house, the pool, the doll – are merely cutouts from magazines.

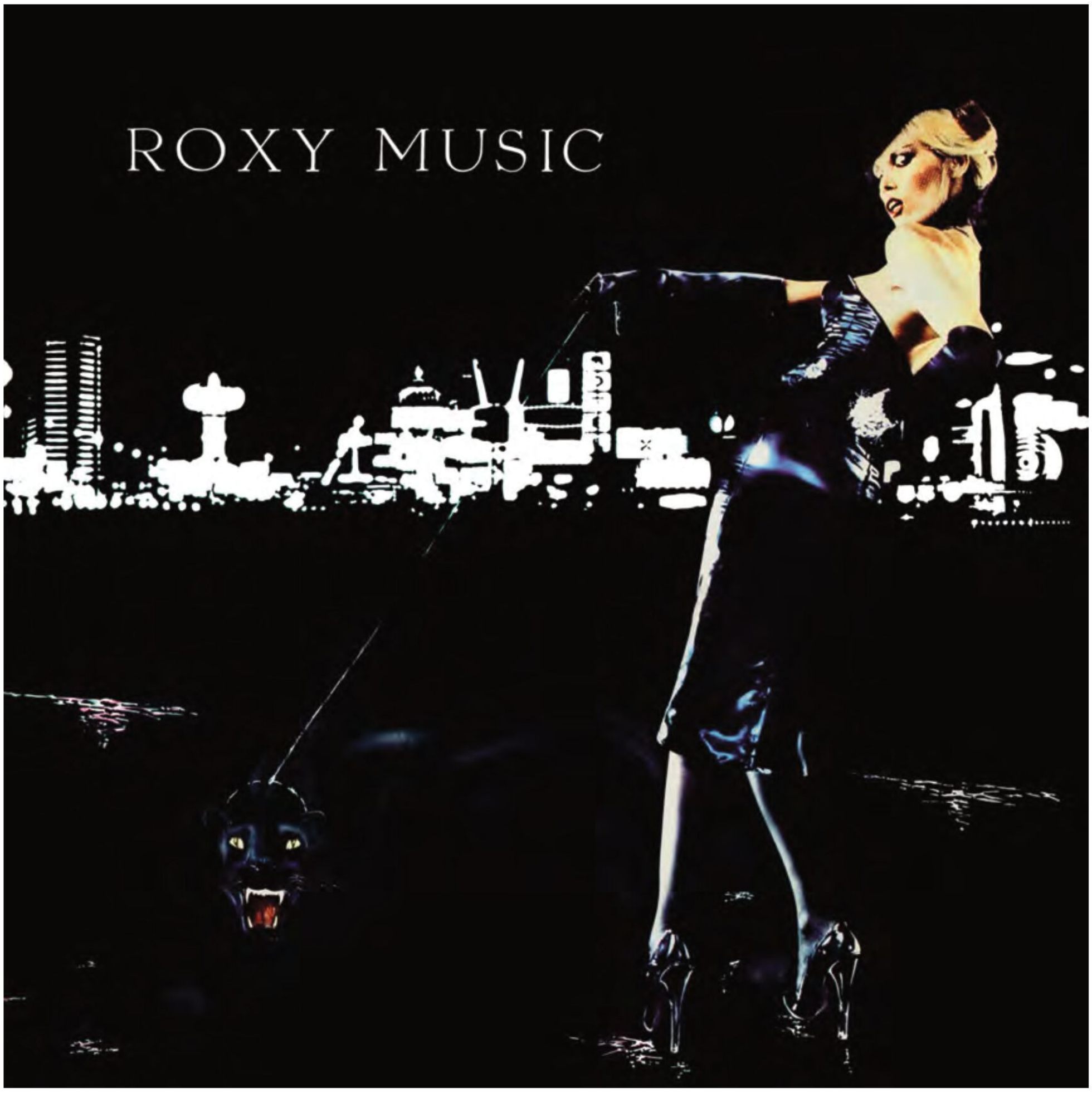
But Ferry's ends are slightly different than those of his mentor. Even in 1973, when Roxy Music unleashed *For Your Pleasure*, they were already identified with the first wave of glam rock, having made a splash with their self-titled debut the previous year. Ferry understood the nature of the scene and its obsession with surface, with mutability: the ever-changeable you was glam's truest and most irreducible subject. "In Every Dream Home A Heartache" and the album it anchors is fascinated by the transitory nature of identity, a common enough theme in the early 1970s but rarely enacted with as much panache as on *For Your Pleasure*.

Rather than condemn the scene for its superficiality, Roxy Music celebrate that quality, which lends even its most ominous moments – the intro to "In Every Dream Home...", for example, or the glitter-dirge of "Strictly Confidential" – an inviting self-awareness, as though he's pulling back the curtain to show us pop's innermost machinery. "Editions Of You", which features one of Ferry's most sardonic performances, imagines ordering up a new version of an old lover, as though flipping through a catalogue, while opener "Do The Strand", arguably their most popular song, runs through a list of passé dance moves before exhorting listeners to do the Strand. The fact that it doesn't exist is the whole point; it's a craze as old as forever even if it hasn't

CRITICS' VERDICTS

"Side Two offers the deeper side of Roxy. It sees them delving into a mass of technicalities/ dream sequences/ electrical tripping/ psychedelia. Yes, it's psychedelic."
Roy Hollingworth, MM, 17/3/1973

"Basically, it's a broadening of scope and an extension of what has gone before. It's not simply a new set of songs in the same style."
Charles Shaar Murray, NME, 24/3/1973



TRACKMARKS

1. Do The Strand ★★★★★
2. Beauty Queen ★★★★
3. Strictly Confidential ★★★★
4. Editions Of You ★★★★★
5. In Every Dream Home A Heartache ★★★★★
6. The Bogus Man ★★★★★
7. Grey Lagoons ★★★★
8. For Your Pleasure ★★★★★

Label: Island (UK); Warner (US)
Produced by: Chris Thomas, John Anthony, Roxy Music
Recorded at: Air Studios, London
Personnel: Bryan Ferry (vocals, piano, organ, harmonica, gtr), Brian Eno (synths, backing vocals), Phil Manzanera (guitars), Andy Mackay (saxophone, oboe, organ), Paul Thompson (drums), John Porter (bass)
Highest chart position: UK 4; US 193

quite arrived yet. "*The Sphinx and Mona Lisa, Lolita and Guernica,*" Ferry insists, "*did the Strand!*"

Ferry, fresh off the success of Roxy's self-titled debut and the inter-album hits "Virginia Plain" and "Pyjamarama", might have viewed his bandmates in terms of his inflatable lovers: disposable and interchangeable. Already the band had undergone tremendous upheaval in its lineup, especially among bass players. Founding member Graham Simpson departed the group after their debut, and his replacement, Rik Kenton, lasted barely one single before leaving. The spot would be filled by a platoon of studio and tour musicians for the duration of the band's life. Even more notorious is the departure of synth player and mad scientist Brian Eno, just four months after the release of *For Your Pleasure*. Eno, like Clapton six years and a lifetime before, was considered a god. Journalists pursued interviews with him rather than with the frontman. Audiences chanted his name loud enough to disrupt their live performances. Groupies favoured Eno's, *ahem*, company over that of the other members. Frustrated at being so completely upstaged, Ferry canned the sideman and soldiered on as the undisputed king of Roxy Music.

IT'S tempting to overstate the tension between Ferry and Eno as a creative force on *For Your Pleasure*, especially considering their wildly different approaches to recording. Working at George Martin's AIR Studios in London with co-producers Chris Thomas and John Anthony, Ferry was focused and diligent, while Eno favoured a looser, more experimental approach as befits an artist who still considers the studio an instrument. The album suggests a growing divide between two musicians moving in opposite directions, with the first side emphasising taut, vocal-driven songs and the second side indulging endless synth tinkerings and tape manipulations. Starting with "In Every Dream Home a Heartache", the songs begin to melt, to sprawl, to morph into new shapes. Stitched together by Paul Thompson's steadily insistent drumbeat and peppered with Andy MacKay's free-jazz saxophone lines, "The Bogus Man" lurches around for nearly 10 minutes, fraying its edges with every measure to achieve a sort of dreamlike chug.

THE SONGS BEGIN TO MELT, TO SPRAWL, TO MORPH INTO NEW SHAPES

Given his obsession with krautrock, Eno is often viewed as the architect of that song, but Ferry is just as much a presence, providing the melody that the rest of the band will unravel. As a result, Roxy Music emerge on *For Your Pleasure* as a formidably resourceful band united in a single mission: to take something as essentially disposable as pop music and use it as the foundation for an album that remains indispensable nearly 50 years later.

It ends with one of their more ambitious gambits: the title track begins with some of Ferry's dreamiest lyrics, as though he's signalling the direction he'll take the band without Eno, then gradually "For Your Pleasure" unravels and untwines, each element of the song coming loose and floating away. The album ends with nothing but a low, menacing rumble and some wordless vocal syllables: pop music pared down to its most basic components. Remarkably, the effect is poignant rather than clever, emotionally unsettling rather than conceptually top-heavy: a fitting farewell to this classic version of the band. ✪

In with the in crowd: Ferry on the *TopPop* TV show, Hilversum studios, Holland, May 1973

"Everything is far superior"

Spring, 1973, and Roxy enter their imperial phase. A great new album. The best hotels. Late night Parisian bacchanals. "It wasn't a case of showing what we could do," says BRYAN FERRY, "but showing how we could do it."

TAKEN FROM MELODY MAKER 17/03/1973

"THERE'S A new sensation. A fabulous creation. A danceable solution. To teenage revolution."

Well, what is it?

"Tired of the tango? Fed up with fandango?"

Most certainly, but have you got anything better Mr Bryan Ferry? What is this new sensation?

"Do the Strand love. When you feel love. It's the new way. That's what we say: Do the Strand."

The Strand?

"The Sphinx and Mona Lisa, Lolita and Guernica. Did the Strand..."

Well, in that case, so will I, and so will you – and before you know it, the whole country will be Stranding like buggery. It's new, it's great, and it's "The Strand".

"I don't quite know what the Strand is," said Bryan Ferry smoking yet another of my Marlboros (but they're nice to share). "It's sort of..."

He shimmied a leg, rolled his eyes, and made a locomotion movement with one arm.

"You can do anything you like to it really. We were going to get Lionel Blair to work out some dance routines for it... but The Strand is everything."

It is. And so is Roxy Music's new album, *For Your Pleasure*. Which Bryan was turning up full volume.

We'd met in the Markham Arms, King's Road. I was expecting to meet some very serious, over-bored, over-aware fellow, with a liking for arty things and nostalgia. Funny what the mind conjures up.

Instead, Ferry is loveable, nervous, witty in the nicest places and as open as a barn door. I found him extraordinary looking, even though he was dressed plainly in black, and a bit of leather. He has a face and forehead that would do justice to a role in *Star Trek*. He looks to all intents and purposes like one of us, Captain, but I beg to tell you that he has two heads, and three brains, said Spock. That sort of thing, if you can see what I mean.

We shared a glass, raved over ELO's "Roll Over Beethoven" gushed out by the juke – "I love Jeff Lynne's singing, but Roy Wood's better. When I was a DJ I had a habit of playing 'Fire Brigade' every night."

Now, there's a little insight into Ferry for you.

We crossed King's Road, full of flurry and fur, and flash, and within minutes were settled into a cushy office, speakers pounding out rock'n'roll, and the lyrics urged one to do the Strand: an opening track to this new Roxy.

And what a fabulous new Roxy this is! Ferry openly admits that it's way better than the first album.

"A year on the road has seen to that. We spent ages over the first album, weeks and weeks and weeks, but got this together in just over 12 days. Our playing is far superior, everything is far superior."

I asked Bryan to comment on the tracks individually, but once the tape had started, neither of us was particularly anxious to talk. Instead we just listened – Ferry, gazing on to the King's Road, me gazing into a space between the two speakers.

Side One.

"Do the Strand": There is absolutely no doubt that when you hear this, you'll put it right back on again, and then again. It's so bloody attractive. Well-plonked eights on the piano, coupled with snorty/wailing/screaming sax. Apart from the lyrics being a total gas – that's not the first thing that catches you. Instead, it's the urge to get up and dance.

"Purely a dancer," said Bryan later. "I think it's nice to write a dancer don't you?"

It's a single, it's got to be a single, I told him.

"But that would be cheating, kids, putting a single out from an album. That's cheating," said Bryan. He's so nice. We played the track three times in all, it's that sort of thing. An honest rocker – and pleasingly bizarre, too.

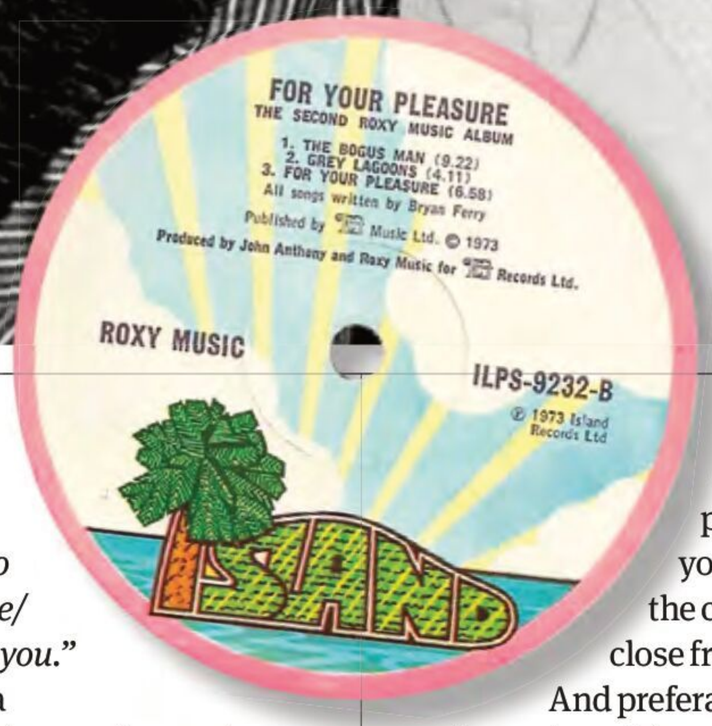
"Beauty Queen": As Bryan so aptly put it: "This one has a distinct Northern working men's club feel to it." On this slow, droopy ballad, Ferry sounds like a mutated cross between Gene Pitney and Engelbert (whoops). Some feverish, but soft guitar nurses the vocal line.

"Oooh the way you look makes my starry eyes shiver." It creeps, and groans a little... groaning so much after a minute

Eno in West London, September 18, 1972

UNITED ARCHIVES GMBH/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO, BRIAN COOKE/REDFERNS

Dutchado: Roxy Music in Holland, May 1973



that you wanna laugh. A smile crept across Ferry's face too, that was just before the curdling finished and the band stops for a split second, and reappears gnashing, and fighting loud and straight snappy rock. They certainly rock like nobody's business on this LP.

"Most things were done on the first take, too. You might say we're together," said Ferry. After the frantic jamming, the number returns to slink and slop.

"Strictly Confidential": Hell, now I know what happened to [*Canadian actor*] Edmund Hockridge – he lost six stone and joined Roxy. The opening in this most certainly has a *Housewives Choice* ballad feel to it, plus the fact that Ferry's voice hits the soapy languor for which Edmund is so rightly famous.

A grower, it lulls one into listening to the lyrics, while the music rolls slowly, rising, and turning. It builds to a nightmarish, confused ending of nasty noise. It leaves one feeling quite emotionally wasted. Most enjoyable.

"Editions Of You". "Ever noticed how much Roxy steal?" someone asked me. "Yes," I replied. "But they steal well." Two lovely examples of masterful thieving occur on this delicious track. For a start the electric piano intro is straight from the opening chords of "Brown Sugar". It don't sound the same – but it is.

Then the actual meat on this rocker is guitar à la "Fortune Teller". It's high-time that guitar phrasing was used again anyhow, and used to beautiful effect too – Like "Strand", this strikes you as an instant single, such is the force, appeal and clean precision.

"Play that one again," – so we did. Oh what a magnificent guitar break that doesn't sound anything like any other guitar break you've ever heard. No mean achievement these days. This showcases the fabulous bass offerings of John Porter – consistent and tremendous throughout.

Ferry's lyrics are again remarkable: *"Too much cheesecake too soon /Old money's better than new/No mention in the latest Tribune/ And don't let this happen to you."* No messing, no wastage – a beginning, a middle, quantity, quality, and an ending.

"In Every Dream Home A Heartache": Ferry's personal favourite.

"It was twice as long when I first wrote it... but with it being a recitation, rather than a song, I had to cut it quite a bit." It is a recitation of an extremely terrifying poem. Personal experiences Bryan? "Um, I'll wait a couple of weeks before I answer that."

Monotonous half-singing. *"I bought you mail order/My plain wrapper baby/Your skin is like vinyl/The perfect companion/Inflatable doll/My role is to serve you/Disposable darling."*

One of those questioning pieces that throws one into a state of doomed confusion. It works on the emotions like a Cohen drama. One's spine is removed – temporarily, to allow for total relaxation, allowing the mind to work freely with the lyrics.

And then it explodes, into a heavy dripping, electric ending. Most stunning, and most certainly the finest lyrics I've seen in a year or two. There's silence, and the track re-appears in a phased swishy form, courtesy of Eno. Rather like the little tit-bits that appeared on Family's first album, *Music In A Doll's House*. Side One is instant, quick and immediately colourful. You could play every track – maybe with the exception of the last – before breakfast, and relish them.

Side Two however offers the deeper side of Roxy. It sees them delving into a mass of technicalities/ dream sequences/electrical tripping/ psychedelia. Yes, it's psychedelic.

One shouldn't be afraid to use that word these days, especially as it really does fit the situation. You'll play Side One anytime, but you'll only play Side Two in the company of oneself, or a few close friends. And late at night. And preferably on cans.

It consists of three 'lengths' rather than 'tracks' – "Bogus Man", "Grey Lagoons" and "For Your Pleasure". The most pleasing (again, on an instant level) is "Bogus Man".

This pumps, and crumps in at a fierce, funking rate. Drums first, and then guitar, and naughty noises from Eno. Slightly reminiscent of "Sat'd'y Barfly" from Family. The reason I say that is because the feeling one gets is of late-night New York, taxi-ridden and heaving, hot with electricity. An uptown funk.

Ferry's voice is actually so screamed and distorted that you'll immediately think of Roger Chapman – it ain't too dissimilar at all. It also has a bizarre burlesque feel in places too.

"Funky chicken guitar is supplied by John Porter," said Bryan. Again, this man must be complimented for his technique, and rocks-off feel. Metallic, quickly swept guitar throughout. There's so much going on, so much to listen to.

Despite the length, lyrical content is short – but aggressive as Hell.

"The bogus man is at your heels/Now clutching at your coat/You must be quick now/Hurry up/He's Scratching at your throat."

Shiver.

Next, "Grey Lagoons" with a dashing tempo, and Mellotron giving the impression of a stoned Welsh choir hovering throughout. The snazzy sax sound from Andy Mackay also adds a Junior Walker edge. Don't know whether to dance, or deliver one's mind to this one.

Ferry adds an outrageous harmonica solo, before the track screws itself into your head in what might be called an "alarming" fashion.

MARKA / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

"It's amazing what things we got into on the second side. It wasn't a case of showing what we could do but showing how we could do it. And I'm extremely pleased with the *way* we did it," said Bryan, flicking yet another cigarette.

With the teasing, and phasing, and dreaming on Side Two, you'll be shown a whole new side of the band. There exists some incredible playing through "Bogus Man" and "Grey Lagoons" and the real canyons of your mind stuff – "For Your Pleasure". But again, this is music for the mind.

When Side Two had driven itself to a crazed halt, I could do no more than ask for "...Strand" again. I love new crazes, and this one is especially loveable.

"Me?" said Bryan. "Well, I like 'em all. I feel we have more aggressive material to offer now. There's certainly aggression on this album."

And so much variety, too, Bryan. "Well, that's the spice of life, isn't it?" he said.

ROY HOLLINGWORTH

TAKEN FROM
MELODY MAKER
12/05/1973

STAYING at the George V is one of life's great experiences, at least to a traveller who savours his changing environments.

In each bathroom is a monogrammed bathrobe (many have been known to disappear, and it is said that the hotel employees discreetly search each guest's baggage before departure, simply removing any contraband without a word to the offender). Its halls are hung with Louis XIV tapestries, and the onlooker is forced to wonder if the Renoir which hangs casually in a glass case in the foyer, is in fact, absolutely genuine. The hotel's cellars secrete bottles of Calvados distilled during the Napoleonic Wars, more than a century and a half ago. It is, in a word, expensive. Not, you would think, the place for a young British rock group, still fighting on the up-curve.

The logistics and economics of rock tours are curious indeed. Roxy Music will make no profit at all from this tour, just as they made no profit from the highly successful British tour which preceded it. "They insisted on staying in the best hotels," one of their attendants sighs. Roxy Music, on tour, are sybarites devoted to the higher levels of pleasure. There are no ludicrous banalities like an antique Persian rug for the bass-player's feet, but still their enjoyment doesn't come cheap. It's got to the point, you see, where tours don't make money by themselves. A manager, or a record company, sinks about £30,000 in to the first two years of a new band's life, paying for equipment and subsidising tours and recording. If all goes well, the third and fourth years will see the investment recouped – and more. The big money comes, eventually, from record sales, and tours are strictly about promoting these sales. In Paris, Roxy are surrounded by record men from Island in Britain and Phonogram in France – all guarding their investment, sniffing and poking it like a farmer with his new pig.

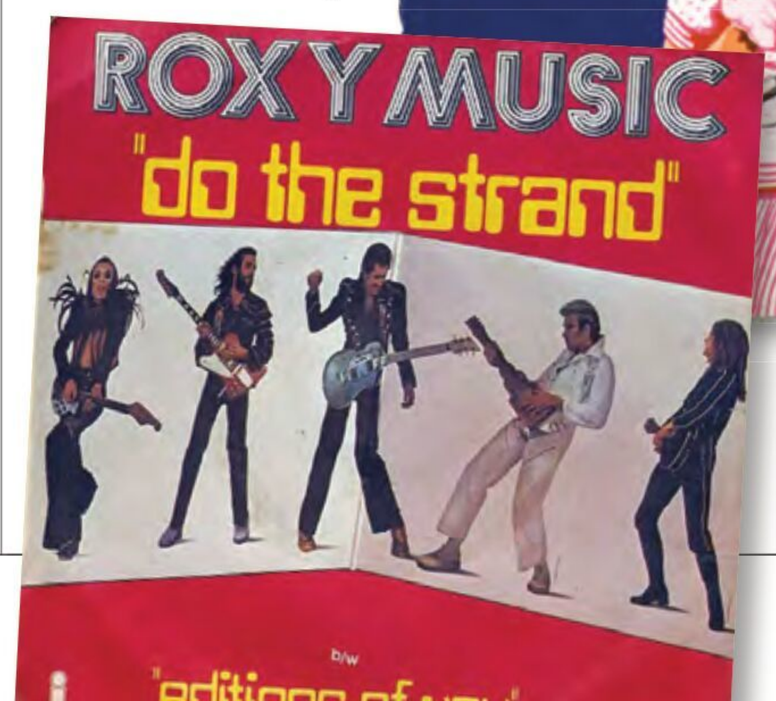
Their stay begins well. Amanda Lear, who appeared with cheetah and pillbox hat on the cover of *For Your Pleasure*, has arranged for them a meeting with her friend Salvador Dalí. They meet the great Surrealist at his permanent apartment in the Hotel Maurice. Dalí – who, after his recent encounter with Alice Cooper, is obviously continuing his lifelong process of rejuvenation – by contact – has invited a TV producer with his camera and crew, but they don't show. Never mind: while the group take tea in a curious paper-walled circular enclave, the old artist jockeys a couple of photographers, posing the musicians around him. It's noticeable that, every time a shutter clicks, Dalí's eyebrows arch into that familiar bug-eyed look with which, to the outside world, he's permanently endowed. After all these years, the reflex is positively Pavlovian. "A master self-publicist," says Bryan Ferry, not uncharitably. Takes one to know one, honey...

"We have more aggressive material now"

BRYAN FERRY

Another member of the group impishly expresses the desire to cut off one of Dalí's curling waxed moustaches, as a piece of conceptual art. Photographs taken, tea drained, the group take their leave and return to the hotel. The first to leave, an hour later, is Lloyd Watson, the *MM* contest-winning singer and slide guitarist, who is now Roxy's preferred concert-opener.

In the wings Roxy await their entry. Several of Ferry's elaborate stage suits were stolen during their British tour, so tonight he's wearing a flared gold brocade D'Artagnan coat hired from a theatrical costumier. There's no longer much to say about their act. It's exactly the same as we saw in Britain, and that's their policy. Nothing in the profile of the set is left to chance, only the audiences change. Either they like it or they don't. It's the detail that keeps them interesting, fourth or fifth time around. On "Do The Strand", for instance, they slip in a couple of bars of 3/4 time behind the line *"Weary of the waltz?"* while Eno's treatment of the guitar and alto sax sound is always novel, often by accident. During "Editions Of You", when his synthesiser conks out during the solos, he merely smiles. Paul Thompson hasn't had enough credit yet: he's as strong and driving as you could wish, but few listeners have yet commented on his inventiveness, which is considerable. The range and variety of his fills and punctuation are crucial to the band, and – with John Porter's bass – he holds them together superbly. Ferry, of, course, is now the master of stagecraft, and destroys this crowd though his command of charisma-inducing devices. His only fault is a tendency to sing uncomfortably sharp during the loud passages (the final section of "In Every Dream Home A Heartache" is a good example). But his vocal control on "Beauty Queen", with its brilliant lyric is stunning: *"Deep into the night, plying very strange cargo, our soulships pass by..."* He takes obvious delight in the aptness of *"Louis Seize 'ee prayfair... laissez-faire le Strand!"*



After the gig, a meal has been arranged at an old-fashioned brasserie. Roughly 40 people turn up, stuffing themselves with veal and snails and bruised strawberries and vin rouge. Eno discovers an ancient barrel-organ affair which produces a din of unparalleled anarchy, and then encourages Lloyd to get drunk. Lloyd, the extrovert of the party, makes speeches, climbs up the walls, throws knives, and finally appals the tail-coated waiters by climbing out of one window, along a ledge on the outside wall and back in through another window. "It's all part of the act, brothers," yells Lloyd, as he disappears backwards out of the, window, simultaneously juggling with a half-full wineglass. He returns, to a chorus of cheers, while the waiters swiftly put up the shutters, and strengthen them with wooden cross-bars.

Meantime, Bryan Ferry confides that he's still planning his solo LP, which he'll record between the end of this tour and their next visit to America in the autumn. It's still going to be a "my favourite things" affair, and so far he's picked Cole Porter's "Ev'rytime We Say Goodbye" from 1944, and songs from Marvin Gaye, Erma Franklin, Smokey Robinson and others. "The trouble with doing something like 'The Tracks Of My Tears'," he says, "is that the original was so brilliant and it's hard to touch it. I might put nine or ten songs on each side, if I can." Led by a couple of French girls who might be go-go dancers, the party leaves the restaurant – to the undisguised relief of the waiters – and heads for a small discotheque. Five years ago, Paris had the world's best discos, reverberating with Aretha Franklin and James Brown. The shock tonight, though, is that people here are dancing to stuff like Crimson's "Schizoid Man". A swift raid on the disc-jockey's box, spearheaded by Phil Manzanera, yields a bunch of 'progressive' LPs and not one single in sight. Eventually, the DJ is bludgeoned into playing Bill Withers and Dr John. "It's funny," he says, bemused, "all the groups want to 'ear the funky musique." So he spins "Bogus Man", while Ferry parodies his own stage movements on the dance-floor, partnered by Ava Gardner's double in a strapless frock. Next day, as the party prepares to move off, the George V counts its bathrobes and sighs. ✪ *RICHARD WILLIAMS*

THE SOLO ALBUMS

ENO 1970s

{ROCK}

RELEASED: 1974–1977

Orgasmic pre-punk, oblique strategies and dream visions made real… After Roxy and before ambience, Eno perfects, then abandons, art rock. **BY PETER WATTS**

THE journey from Brian Eno's career with Roxy Music to the avant-garde ambient work he began recording later in the 1970s wasn't a direct one, but the contours of its evolution can be traced in the four solo 'rock' albums he released between 1974 and 1977. The first pair of these, 1974's rock-packed twin-set *Here Comes The Warm Jets* and *Taking Tiger Mountain (By Strategy)* are also two of the most straightforwardly enjoyable albums Eno has ever recorded, Roxy-tinged art-rock pieces laced with great tunes, weirdness, humour and adventure. *Another Green World* adds more subtlety to the mix, while the majestic *Before And After Science*, which came after Eno had discovered the less direct charms of *Discreet Music*, acted as his farewell as a writer and performer of guitar-led, song-orientated rock.

Here Comes The Warm Jets is explosive, flamboyant, ambitious and experimental. It was recorded with 16 musicians, including all of Roxy Music bar Ferry plus Chris Spedding, Robert Fripp, members of the Pink Fairies and Hawkwind. A peacock feather in musical form, *...Warm Jets* is the sound of a man stretching himself and discovering the full range of his talents. Each song seems to celebrate a different genre, with Eno perfecting a sound, perverting the arrangement and then moving swiftly on.

You can hear the ghosts of Eno's future throughout, from the nihilistic proto-punk of "Blank Frank", to stadium-sized anthem "Needles In The Camel's Eye" and the gorgeous proto-ambient "On Some Faraway Beach", a song that came fully formed in a dream and features 27 pianos. The deranged drone of "Driving Me Backwards" floats ideas later explored on Bowie's "Warszawa", while the "Paw Paw Negro Blowtorch" has some of Talking Heads' choppy drama. Eno's past is there too, most notably in the Ferry-like deadpan sneer of "Dead Finks Don't Talk", which Eno later said was, subconsciously at least, about his recent bandmate. The entirety remains incredible even if it sometimes feels as if it's only held together by willpower and character, both of which Eno had in abundance.

"I'm always prone to do things very quickly, which has distinct advantages – you leave all the mistakes in, and the mistakes always become interesting," Eno told Chrissie Hynde in a 1974 interview that's almost as eye-opening as the music he was releasing. True to his word, he then released *Taking Tiger Mountain*... the same year as *...Warm Jets*. Slightly cleaner in sound than its predecessor, this was recorded by a tighter band consisting of Phil Manzanera and Robert Wyatt, along with Brian Turrington and Freddie Smith of The Winkies.

One reason Eno wanted to invite so many musicians to the *...Warm Jets* sessions was to engender a sense of chaos, something he then exacerbated by directing proceedings through the unusual methods of body language and dancing. For *Taking Tiger Mountain*... he had a smaller team, so chased the same sense of chance by employing the Portsmouth Sinfonia, an orchestra that only allows people to join if they haven't used the instrument before, and using the Oblique Strategies cards he had created with Peter Schmidt. One significant guest was Phil Collins, who played drums on the gorgeous "Mother Whale Eyeless", returning a favour for Eno's work on *The Lamb Lies Down On Broadway*.

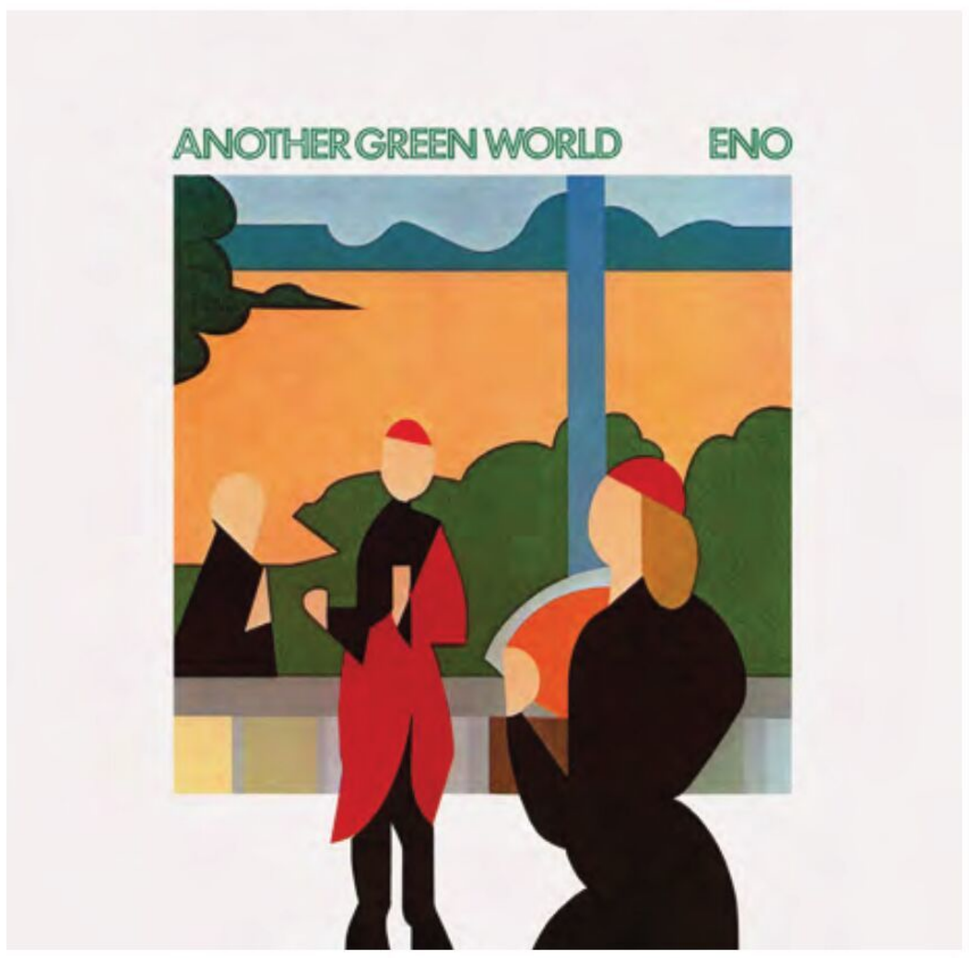
CRITICS' VERDICTS

HERE COME THE WARM JETS

"Listen, fergit yer Jobriaths and such. If you want a record that consists of nothing but elaborate poses, get this and pose along with a *real* faker." Charles Shaar Murray, NME, 9/2/1974

BEFORE AND AFTER SCIENCE

"Compared to his work on, say, *'Heroes'*, Eno on his own is just too dry too often for my tastes." Nick Kent, NME, 3/2/1977



TRACKMARKS

HERE COME THE WARM JETS
★★★★★
Label: Island
Released: January 1974
Produced by: Brian Eno
Recorded at: Majestic Studios, London
Highest chart position: UK 26; US 151

TAKING TIGER MOUNTAIN (BY STRATEGY)
★★★★
Label: Island
Released: November 1974
Produced by: Brian Eno
Recorded at: Island Studios, London
Highest chart position: UK –; US –

ANOTHER GREEN WORLD
★★★★
Label: Island
Released: September 1975
Produced by: Brian Eno, Rhett Davies
Recorded at: Island Studios, London
Highest chart position: UK –; US –

BEFORE AND AFTER SCIENCE
★★★★★
Label: Polydor
Released: December 1977
Produced by: Brian Eno, Rhett Davies
Recorded at: Basing St Studios, London; Conny's Studio, Cologne
Highest chart position: UK –; US 171

The album has much the same carnival atmosphere as ...*Warm Jets* but lacks a little of the effervescence. That's not to say there aren't several great songs, like the post-punk-anticipating clatter of "Third Uncle" and the brilliant, buzzing art pop of "Burning Airlines Give You So Much More" (the art of the song title was yet another thing Eno had perfected). The sing-song "Put A Straw Under Baby" is a route towards future ambience, but otherwise the shift from ...*Warm Jets* is detectable more in tone than anything else – this is a little more subdued, the rainbow hues are starting to blur.

FOR 1975's *Another Green World*, Eno once again employed the Oblique Stategies cards. He also used a variety of musicians, including Fripp, Collins and John Cale, but recorded several tracks completely alone. As a result, this is considerably less frenetic than its two predecessors, with a noticeable sense of calm at its centre. Although *Another Green World* features several instrumentals, it is still largely song based and tied to recognisable rock rhythms. And it includes a couple of his best pop songs – "St Elmo's Fire", which features a terrific Fripp solo, and the genteel "I'll Come Running" – as well as instrumentals such as "The Big Ship" and "In Dark Trees".

The title track is like a fusion of the two styles, a memorable hook that never quite turns into pop but is far more than simple mood music. It later provided the theme tune for the BBC's *Arena* series; Eno's ability to create these sort of high-class jingles saw him later employed by Microsoft to compose the start-up sound for Windows 95.

ENO WOULD NEVER REALLY RETURN TO THE STYLE THAT CREATED THESE FOUR UNIQUE MASTERPIECES

Kept busy producing other artists, Eno's final 'rock' album arrived in 1977, after he had released his first ambient LP, *Discreet Music*. The monochrome cover art suggests something rather studious and chin-stroking, but *Before And After Science* manages the impossible, squaring the circle between Eno's ambient and art-pop works. There is, if anything, even greater elegance than *Another Green World* on tracks like "By This River" and "Energy Fools The Musician", but also an acknowledgement of the playfulness of ...*Warm Jets* in tracks like "Backwater", "Here He Comes" and "King's Lead Hat" (an anagram of Talking Heads). Eno was said to have written 100 songs for the album, and he recorded it with a huge cast including members of Can and Cluster, plus old hands Manzanera, Fripp, Wyatt and Collins. But it's clearly Eno's vision that holds everything together – and it's that single-minded ability to make sense of the mass of men and material that shows why Eno was to become such a successful producer. There is nothing about *Before And After Science* to suggest he was growing tired of the format or running out of ideas, but Eno would never really return to the style that created these four unique masterpieces. Instead, he employed many of the techniques in his work with Talking Heads, Devo, Bowie and U2. Our loss, their gain.

Brian Eno in '73: taking flight as a solo artist but yet to shed his Roxy plumage

“I’m interested in things being absurd”

BRIAN ENO has amicably departed “terrific” Roxy Music. Plans? He has a few. An album with Percy Edwards. A new experimental label. Even an orchestra. “If nothing else I’m known as a mutator of sound,” he tells **GEOFF BROWN**

PENNIESMITH

TAKEN FROM
MELODY MAKER
10/11/1973

"I'LL make a prediction here," said Brian Eno, stretched out on a sofa and looking as wan and wasted as a consumptive 19th-century poet. "I think, in fact, I shall be seen as a rock revivalist in a funny way, because the thing that people miss when they do their rock revival rubbish is the fact that early rock music was, in a lot of cases, the product of incompetence, not competence."

And if there's one thing that Eno is, it's an incompetent musician. That's what he thinks anyway. "There's a misconception," he continued, "that these people were brilliant musicians, and they weren't. They were brilliant musicians in the spiritual sense. They had terrific ideas and a lot of ball or whatever. They knew what the physical function of music was, but they weren't virtuosi."

Just like Eno, see? The reaction he's predicted should follow the release on January 11 of his solo album. He's finished it. He played me the tapes. It's great stuff, marvellous fun. There's a track with out-of-tune piano, there's a track that's just two notes, there's a track with a frantic Fripp scrubbing a violent solo, there's a track with great and witty lyrics, which sounds as though it just might be a dig at Ferry.

Lovely titles, too – "Blank Frank", "Dead Finks Don't Talk", "Driving Me Backwards". Brian Eno is a complete contradiction. His glamorous stage appearance presupposed a cultured speech, a distant coolness. In private his accent is softened cockney; his manner is open and friendly.

His face is like one of Tolstoy's starving artists. Gaunt, aquiline, sensitive nose, high cheekbones topped with thinning white hair which is streaked with reddish rust colouring over the right ear. The surroundings in this Ladbroke Grove living room match the image perfectly. Faded elegance. A fox fur hanging over a cane room divider, a broken rocking horse in one corner, shelves of books, records and tapes in another.

Since leaving Roxy, Eno's been working prolifically. He's recorded an album with Bob Fripp, he's recorded his own solo material for future solo albums, and he's heavily involved in the formation of an avant-garde music label. All this and he's bringing fun back into rock too.

It has made him ill. He can't swallow yet, he's often very, very hungry. The night before, he was bought a three-course meal and, he says, just about managed to eat the soup. His weight is down to 8st 1lb and, dressed in black shirt and trousers, he looks like a pencil.

But though he's not physically fit his eyes have a bright sparkle. They laugh.

Brian Eno left Roxy Music because he got bored.

"First of all let me say that I think Roxy is a great band and I think their new album is terrific."

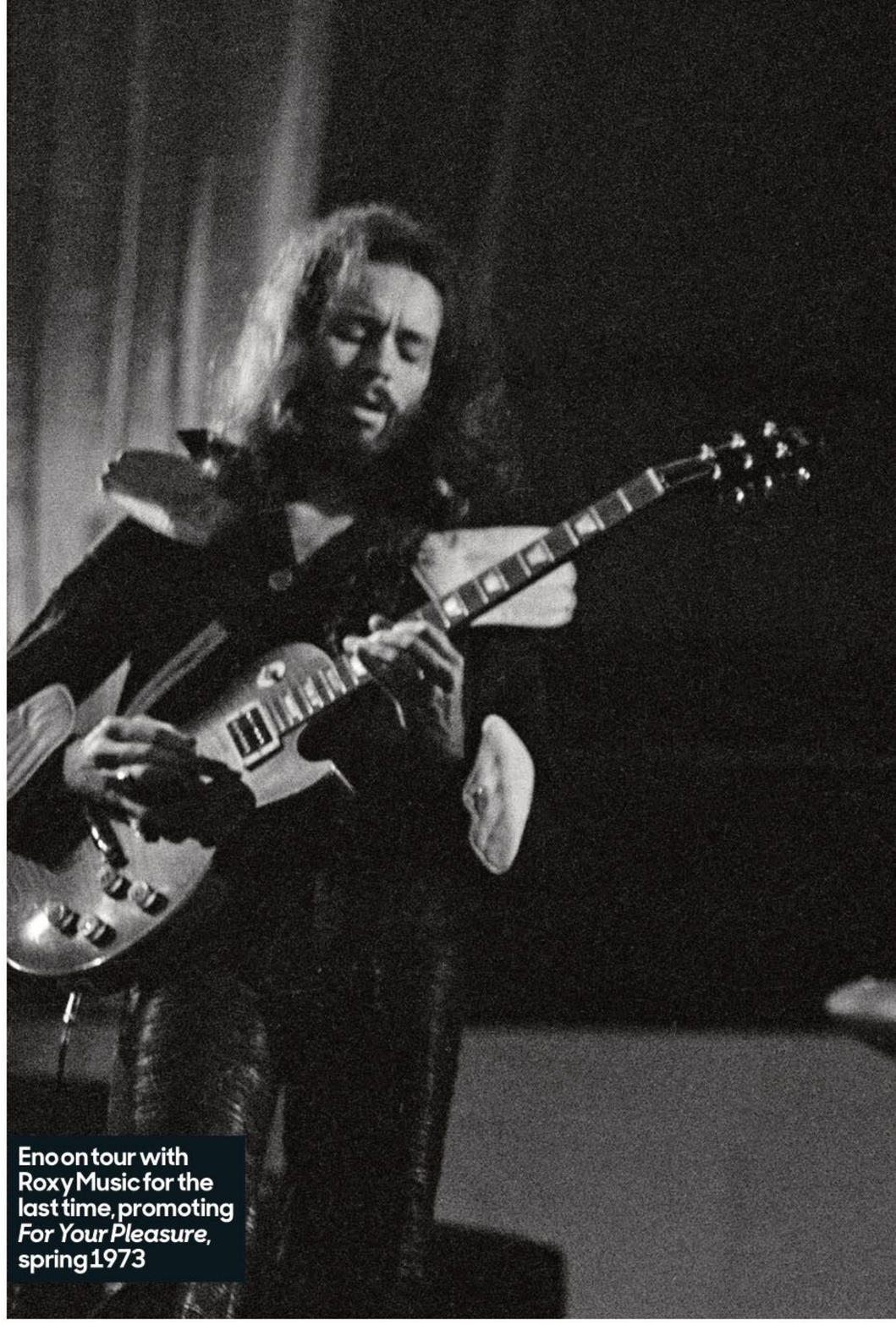
Right.

"But what it lacks for me is one of the most important elements of my musical life, which is insanity. I'm interested in things being absurd and there was something really exciting in Roxy at the time. We were juxtaposing things that didn't naturally sit together."

Brian liked the awkwardness of the early band – "Things were just being collaged together. The element of clumsiness and grotesqueness that arose from that early thing ceased to be there."

Everyone in Roxy had completely different talents and interests and "there was a terrific tension at one stage in the music, which I really enjoyed".

You get one person playing simple rhythms (himself, for instance, stabbing chords on piano, playing simply through sheer necessity) and another would play complex patterns over the top. There's a lot of that contrast in ability on his solo album because he used musicians from totally different areas in the sessions. There was, for instance, Fripp and John Wetton on bass and Simon King on drums "and me on piano, and I can't play piano to save my life. I think it's successful because the piano and drums are so restricted in what they do that it gives those other instruments a terrific amount of freedom."



Eno on tour with Roxy Music for the last time, promoting *For Your Pleasure*, spring 1973

THERE'S an impression that Eno is trying to recreate the early spirit of Roxy Music and move it in a direction that he would've preferred. There is, however, no great evidence of any personal friction between Eno and Ferry.

"The problem in the last year of being in Roxy was that I didn't feel that there was any time to experiment."

Eno could get an idea he'd want to try, but he'd need time to set it up, say an hour.

"Since we were paying equally for the studio time, it's quite expensive... It works out at about £10 each for me to do an experiment, and it's in the nature of an experiment that it might fail."

"There was a terrific tension at one stage in the music"

BRIAN ENO

He laughs. The fallacy of rock music, says Eno, is that experimental music is successful. That, he says, is obvious but not true. It wouldn't be an experiment if there wasn't a chance of failure. He's spent a whole day in the studio just trying for a sound and he never reached it. That's experimenting.

"The worst thing about feeling that constraint of time is you feel you must make safe experiments, so you don't actually move very far because you do things that you know have a very good chance of succeeding."

Eno first got into music through poetry. He used to sing along to records a lot, of course, and by the time he was 10 could do a very fair Buddy Holly imitation. He never thought he'd be in a group though. He couldn't play an instrument, which doesn't really help, and he had no inclination to learn, which also doesn't help.

His first real instrument was a tape recorder.

"It was the first thing I learnt to use in a creative way. I think the only way one can define a musical instrument is a piece of equipment, be it a piece of wood with metal on or a couple of engines with tape on them that one uses to create or transform sounds."

The first things Eno did were connected with phonetic poetry rather than music and singing. He'd build up tracks with spoken words and then he'd talk over the top of them. He did this at Ipswich Art College, where he was studying art.

"I was a painter... not a very good one, incidentally."

He leans over the side of the sofa and produces a plastic bag. It's full of notebooks. In them are descriptions of his paintings. "They're far better than the paintings, they really are [*that eye-sparking laugh again*]. Someone's making a film about the notebooks at the moment."

He opens one. It's full of minute writing and diagrams. They go back to when he was about 16 and look like Leonardo da Vinci's earliest doodlings.

"Then I gradually found myself becoming more and more interested in avant-garde music."

He found that music was a much quicker medium than painting and therefore more satisfying to him. There wasn't such a gap between the formation of an idea and its execution. That's why he rarely finished a painting. He'd already conceived another idea and the old one bored him.

His paintings are unfinished or completed in "a very unconvincing way. They looked as if I'd got bored halfway through, which in fact is what had happened."

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

Music was that much more immediate. As soon as you start you're making sounds.

"It's an activity that has a more direct emotional appeal."

That's why most of the art forms revolve around music, says Eno. He shifts his light bulk in the sofa. His empty stomach is causing some aggravation.

He got into rock music in 1969. He was a singer for a short while before returning to the avant-garde fold. But it was an important few months. The group was Maxwell Demon.

Their music, says Eno, was "not unlike some of the stuff on my album, actually. It was very advanced in some ways but backward in others. We didn't rehearse very much and I never used to write lyrics, or not very much. I used to improvise them, which is, in fact, how most of the lyrics in this [*solo album*] are done."

Eno improvises and then writes the lyrics down: "The way I write lyrics is very interesting. I don't know if I should reveal it before I patent it."

Maxwell Demon was an ambitious project. It took a lot of confidence to get on stage with 10 minutes' rehearsed music and play for an hour. By definition, improvisatory bands like that often do things which don't work out. Eno found it "quite nerve-racking".

"I thought it craved the indulgence of the audience a bit too much, really, but it was a very useful experience because it indicated that I did have a feeling for rock music that I wasn't aware of before, and also that I really loved singing. I really loved it, very, very much. And I never forgot that."

After Maxwell Demon broke up Eno thought that this flirtation with rock had come to an end. The fact that he couldn't play an instrument was the problem once again; he'd be a luxury in any group. Then in early 1971 a group was formed that needed a luxury addition. Eno joined Roxy. He'd known Andy Mackay from some work they'd done on one or two avant-garde electronic music things.

One of the reasons Eno thinks he was asked to join is because he wouldn't play the instrument in an ordinary way, "which is the most pedestrian and boring way imaginable, where they treated it as an extended Farfisa organ".

It's not as good as a Farfisa for that type of work, says Eno, and anyway he thinks that the term synthesisers should be extended to include the more general term 'electronic'. The people he likes for electronics are Phil Spector and Jimi Hendrix. People who realise that "what they're doing is a whole extended process right up to the loudspeakers. I don't like synthesisers, I must confess at this stage. They've got so many bad associations."

He's always asked about people like Walter Carlos and so on, but says, "I'm totally bored by them, I really am."

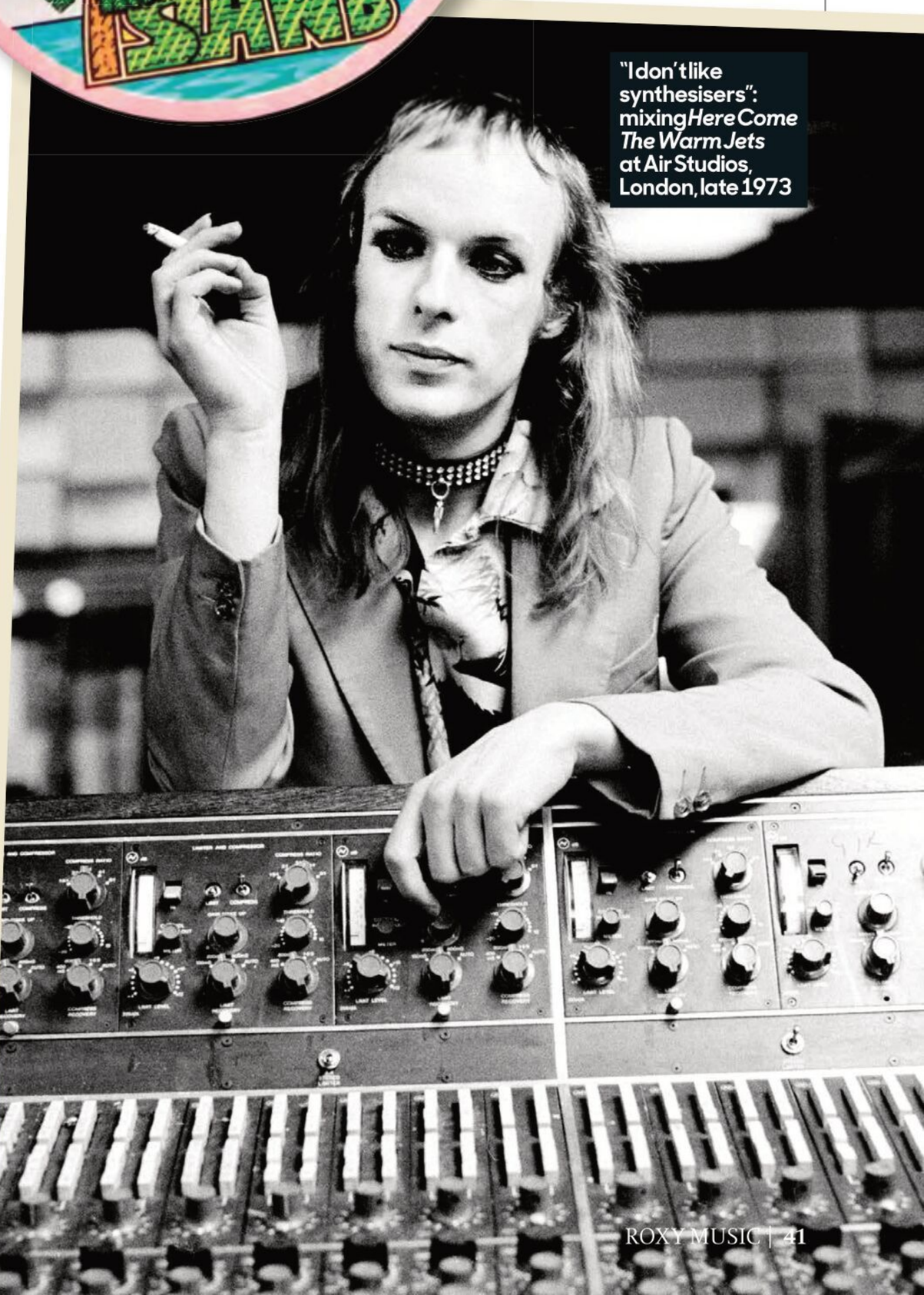
In electronics and avant-garde music, John Cage has most influence him as a theorist; Morton Feldman has been most important as a composer. "The idea of music as being just a chunk out of a longer continuum has always appealed to me. That's why I like The Velvet Underground. You get the feeling with a lot of their tracks that they started many years before and they'll end many years later and all you're hearing is just a chunk taken out somewhere and put on to the record."

Much of Eno's solo album has that same feeling; quite a lot of the Fripp/Eno has it too. The collaboration happened quite by accident when Eno mentioned to Fripp that he'd invented something that treated guitar sounds in an unusual way. Bob popped in one night, tried out the device, immediately realised what was happening to the sounds and adapted to it, played on it as though it was the most natural thing to do.

"The first side of that album took literally 15 minutes to make. Nobody believes that, because there were about 50 guitars on it and it wasn't doctored or anything."

Eno had 'invented' a whole mess of things that relate to the use of tape recorders. Once you accept, he says, that all you're dealing with is time and the ability to hold things from the past, it's quite simple.

"Nothing I've ever done with a tape recorder is brilliant... It's just obvious if you think of what the true function of a tape recorder is – if you think of it as an automatic musical collage device."



"I don't like synthesisers": mixing *Here Come The Warm Jets* at Air Studios, London, late 1973

GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/REDFERNS

Brian Eno reckons he'd perform on stage again at some time, but not heavy touring. "I think what I'm doing at the moment is much more important to me than performing anyway."

He prefers the studio. It's become his natural environment. He doesn't feel it necessary to direct musicians. He just listens to what they're playing and "then I'd take what they're doing and say, 'What position does this put me in' and 'How can I justify the musical idea to suit.'

"I just find myself so happy in studios [*that laugh again*] – so happy I just spend my life in them and feel very tired and very ill as a result."

The musicians on the solo album, says Eno, don't mind his manipulation of their sound. They know what to expect when they play on his sessions... "If nothing else I'm known as being a mutator of sound. I learnt very much doing this album. I did this very quickly. I recorded it in 12 days, so it's quite a cheap album."

He had a good relationship with the engineer, which was important for his type of work. "Empirically, I know what sounds I want, though in technical terms I might not be able to express them as well."

In many ways he sounded like Willie Mitchell describing the development of the 'Al Green' sound.

Eno has already started on his second solo album. It sounds, judging by the tapes he played me, an extension of the first album. No new directions, just working the same field, a bit more.

He shifts in the sofa again and looks uncomfortable, pained. A bit more talk about Roxy, perhaps.

He enjoyed America when they were there. Not the playing but the stimulating tension of New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago.

"I get the feeling that I enjoyed America more than anyone else in Roxy. It was disappointing in terms of playing, because it was a very badly structured tour."

ENO hates touring. So much time is wasted in travelling, so little is spent on music. On that US tour he worked out that they were in America for four or five weeks. In all they played 10 hours of music. Such a waste.

Now he's left Roxy the group has, apparently, eased off the glamour. "I assume they'll have replaced it with some other kind of image. I don't know, but Roxy is in a position now where it doesn't have to push itself in any way. People are going to come to the concerts however the band looks or however they play," he laughs that twinkling laugh.

"It's true, it's evidently true." That accent. The 'tees' and 'aitches' are beginning to fall away like autumn leaves. "After a while, so many assumptions are made about your music, the audience is actually hearing assumptions rather than sounds. It really is irrelevant how Roxy play – for a while anyway."

Eno, by the way, thinks they play very well but were under-rehearsed for the start of their tour. He'll probably go see them at the Rainbow. Had Eno developed his 'glamorous' image deliberately? Was this a slight blush?

"I don't think one ever does consciously plan out a campaign that way. What tends to happen is that you do something, it gets responded to well, so you do it a bit more and you keep doing it more until the response starts falling off."

He's always been doing things like the glam bit, though. "It wasn't a difficult thing to do, I didn't suddenly thing I'm gonna change my life and do this, it just seemed like a natural thing for me to do."

He shifts once more. Lights a cigarette. The pause lengthens. That smile erupts. "It's connected with sexual affairs quite strongly, I should imagine. In a way that I can't amplify on either."

Then let us talk, I suggested, about the avant-garde label he's trying to set up.

At present there's Gavin Bryars and there's the Portsmouth Sinfonia. Bryars, it seems, happened to be walking under Waterloo Arches in 1968 with a portable tape recorder in hand. He recorded a tramp singing a hymn – "Jesus' Blood". He made a tape loop of it, wrote a score for it, hired a small orchestra and recorded each instrument coming in one at a time. First strings, then bass, then tuba, the organ etc. So that over this "very sad, broken old voice" a beautiful orchestra build up.

Sounds a bit like "Amazing Grace" to me, but Eno reckons it'll get compared to Terry Riley. Everything avant-garde gets compared to Terry Riley, he says, and cites a review of the Fripp/Eno album as evidence.

The Sinfonia are, says Eno, "a group of musicians of varying degrees of competence". Some can play, some can't; some can read music; some can't. There seem to be more can'ts than cans. They try to play the popular classics seriously, but their untutored personnel ensure it comes out sounding very funny. The violin section, for instance, has a good lead violinist whose fingering is copied by the man sitting next to him, who is copied by the one next to him and so on. "So there's a delay in terms of time and a decay in terms of accuracy... You get this very lush feeling to the thing."

It may sound pretty appalling, but Eno's enthusiastic about it. "The vast majority of these people can't play their instruments and yet they are definitely producing music."

"I find myself so happy in studios, I spend my life in them"

BRIAN ENO

Brian Eno is the clarinettist in the Portsmouth Sinfonia: "And if you think I'm bad at guitar..." The smile glows again.

There's also another project he's toying with. "I thought of writing a piece of music and not using rock musicians at all for it and yet try to make it sound like rock music. People like Winifred Atwell and Larry Adler and Percy Edwards. It would be just amazing to get them into a studio to try to make rock music with them."

Though he may be feeling physically drained at the moment, Eno's been talking for almost two hours with infectious enthusiasm. If he sells enough solo albums he may get on the road, but it'll have to be a short tour.

Travelling is, he reiterates, an unproductive chore and his health deteriorates and he needs a long time after to get creatively thinking again. He's unsure whether the usefulness of playing live is worth the aggravation, though it does feed a certain side of his ego.

Eno on stage getting the buzz from the crowds, roaring through the encore ("Roxy always played best on encores"), then slumping like a zombie in the dressing room. Is that all there is? "Inevitably you want something more to happen to carry the feeling on."

A recording studio back at the hotel would get some great music taped, he says. The release, of course, would come in wenching and clubbing. Apparently, unlike the rest of Roxy, Eno has little trouble in this direction. Did he miss that aspect of the road, that type of release?

He got up from the sofa and disappeared into the kitchen. He returned with a plate. On it rested half a pineapple. He bit squelchily into its flesh just as a tall, somewhat gorgeous female creature walked into the living room. Brian Eno munched at the pineapple. It looked like he was starting to eat again, anyway. ✪

The Winkies, backing band for the ...Warm Jets UK tour: (l–r) Eno, Michael Desmarais, Philip Rambow, Guy Humphreys and Brian Turrington, February 1974

GEORGE WILKES/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES, MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

"I get the feeling that I enjoyed America more than anyone else in Roxy": Brian Eno in London, March 2, 1973

STRANDED

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 23, 1973

Hovering between arty heartache and decadence, Roxy power through the post-Eno uncertainty with a swaggering chart-topper.

BY SAM RICHARDS

FOR anyone wondering where to start with this complex and contradictory band, for sceptics questioning whether these art-school fops could really rock, send them here: to Roxy Music's third album, a thrilling and highly accessible encapsulation of what made them great.

Recorded quickly in a period of turmoil, at a time when half the band were secretly also working on the debut solo album from their acrimoniously departed synth player, *Stranded* makes a virtue of its fraught and hasty inception. It barrels through its eight songs with manic confidence, revelling in the commotion. With their debut album's prophecy of a new age of postmodern glamour now fulfilled, *Stranded* was free to be thrillingly of-the-moment, neither too retro nor too futuristic, too arch nor too sincere. It's not sonically experimental in the same way the first two albums sometimes were, nor does it summon an Arcadian alternate reality with the dedication of *Avalon*, but it's packed with satisfying tricks and gimmicks that adorn some surprisingly driving and muscular rock, to the point where many predicted it would be the Roxy album that broke America (it wasn't, but their loss).

It begins frantically, in a hubbub of noise that you assume was achieved by dangling a microphone out of Air Studios on to Oxford Street but was in fact a library recording of a Moroccan market. New boy Eddie Jobson makes his first telling contribution with a discordant Mellotron fanfare designed to sound like car horns hooting, a quick reassurance that Eno's impish spirit lives on. A theatrical drum roll, then in roars Phil Manzanera with a riff like an overpowered sports car on a central London street, gunning it through to the next set of lights. Thankfully Andy Mackay is still here too, honking away, having almost joined Mott The Hoople before rightly concluding he could have just as much fun by staying put.

"Wish everybody would leave me alone," pouts Bryan Ferry, protesting way too much. The way he then enunciates *"telephone"*, like a ludicrously over-the-top impression of a Wildean dandy discovering the technology for the first time, is one of the great marvels of 20th-century pop. Ferry was already on his third album of 1973, after *For Your Pleasure* and his own solo debut *These Foolish Things*, but there's no sign of the fatigue that would set in later. Here, he's a man at the very top of his game, paring down any needless lyrical excesses, able to summon worlds and straddle centuries with a deft flick of the tongue – from Arizona to Eldorado.

The self-congratulatory handclap that accompanies his namedrop of *"Zarathustra"* on "Mother Of Pearl" is brilliantly audacious, although there are moments on *Stranded* when Ferry's preening wordplay verges on the Richard Stilgoe. "Amazona" may cross the line in that respect but then again, this is pop music, self-consciously

CRITICS' VERDICTS

"A classic... the long-awaited firm ground for the group's fans to stand on, even if some of the subtleties of the earlier approach have had to go in order to get there."
Ian MacDonald, NME, 10/11/1973

"Roxy Music evoke on this album an impression of lush melancholy, full of elusive bittersweet fragrances."
Michael Watts, MM, 10/11/1973

TRACKMARKS

1. Street Life
2. Just Like You
3. Amazona
4. Psalm
5. Serenade
6. A Song For Europe
7. Mother Of Pearl
8. Sunset

Label: Island (UK); Atco (US)
Producer: Chris Thomas
Recorded at: Air Studios, London
Personnel: Bryan Ferry (vocals, piano), Andrew Mackay (oboe, saxophone), Paul Thompson (drums, timpani), Phil Manzanera (guitar), Eddie Jobson (violin, synthesiser, keyboards), Johnny Gustafson (bass), Chris Lawrence (string bass on "Sunset"), The London Welsh Male Choir (vocals on "Psalm")
Highest chart position: UK 1; US 186

transient and silly. If it makes you smile once, that's enough. And listen to Manzanera here, chopping out that funk riff like Leo Nocentelli of The Meters. Twenty years later it was sampled by two former members of 23 Skidoo for the popular UK remix of Ice-T's "That's How I'm Livin'", a pile-up of cultural juxtapositions that would surely have delighted '73 Roxy.

Proto-samplers themselves, some of Roxy's steals here are hilariously brazen. George Harrison might have wondered why he wasn't receiving royalties for "A Song For Europe", although this glorious mini-melodrama – co-credited to Mackay perhaps to stave off the threat of another departure – ultimately cuts deeper than Harrison's gentle weep: *"Though the world is my oyster,"* mopes Ferry, *"it's only a shell full of memories."* As always, his wordplay dares you to groan – *"My gondola glides/And the bridge, it sighs"* – as always, you forgive him.

Penetrate the deliberately glib veneer and many songs ultimately return to the themes of heartache and decadence explored on *For Your Pleasure*, with an ever-present Cowerdian wit. "Serenade", musically one of Roxy's least subtle numbers, is particularly good for this: *"G-Plan gymnastics by an everglow fire/Could never be the same."* The only time Ferry's finely tuned sense of irony deserts him here is when it comes to the artwork. Whereas you could argue that the first two Roxy covers were provocative, even empowering, the exploitative pose demanded here of Marilyn Cole – who is not even credited on the sleeve, unlike the shoot's all-male stylists – is merely shabby. Though, of course, there was worse to come on that score.

STRANDED MAKES A VIRTUE OF ITS FRAUGHT AND HASTY INCEPTION

STRANDED'S highpoint is the fabulous seven-minute epic "Mother Of Pearl" – possibly the definitive mid-period Roxy song, since its two-part structure makes room for two Bryan Ferrys: the jittery, over-dressed wannabe of the early albums, and the suave, knowing insider he would become. Part 1 is spooked, snarling, almost Stooges-esque, complete with yelped vocals and a stinging guitar solo. Part 2 is majestic and assured, Ferry outdoing himself with increasingly extravagant seduction gambits: *"Serpentine sleekness/Was always my weakness,"* he purrs, as a lissom debutante swoons onto a nearby chaise-longue. Yet the more he goes on, the more his objective is made to seem wholly superficial, a spiritually empty union between two plastic people, lying to themselves about who they really are.

"Sunset" is different again, with its Steve Reich pianos, low bowed strings and exotic percussion despatching the album on a note of tranquil oddness. Overall, it's genuinely difficult to see what Eno could have added here. Instead, we get *Stranded* and *Here Come The Warm Jets*, a plentiful bounty from the most important pop group of the era. ✪

THE SOLO ALBUMS

BRYAN FERRY 1970s

RELEASED: 1973-1978

The singer laid bare by his influences. With Roxy in the wings, Ferry cultivates a new market with remade and remodelled classics.

BY TERRY STAUNTON

AFORTNIGHT apart in October 1973, two of pop's most forward-thinking artists took surprisingly retrograde steps. David Bowie released *Pin Ups*, an LP of covers comprising, as he explained on the back sleeve, "favourites from the '64-'67 period of London"; songs by The Who, The Kinks, The Yardbirds and others.

Two weeks earlier, Bryan Ferry's *These Foolish Things* had landed in record racks, boasting a broader, arguably more outlandish remit. It had its fair share of perhaps predictable source material in Dylan ("A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall"), The Beatles ("You Won't See Me") and the Stones ("Sympathy For The Devil"), but who could have expected this sophisticated arbiter of cool to so enthusiastically embrace the teen pop heartbreak of Lesley Gore ("It's My Party") or the girl group cheese of The Paris Sisters ("I Love How You Love Me")?

Then there was the title track, a jazz standard written in 1936 and subsequently recorded by the likes of Billie Holiday, Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra – a far cry from Ferry's most recent chart croon "Pyjamarama" just six months previously. The album proved to be no one-off diversion, though, but the opening salvo in a decade of releases for the most part dominated by covers.

It isn't a complete break from all things Roxy, however, as Phil Manzanera, Paul Thompson and Eddie Jobson all lend a hand, but the key collaborator is producer John Porter, who contributes the bulk of the guitar and bass parts. But its Ferry's personality, his melodramatic vocal style that distinguishes the record, especially on the Dylan track that took him back into the UK Top 10 and helped propel the album to No 5.

If *These Foolish Things* was intended as a mischievous parlour trick, a curveball to confuse Roxy Music's more serious devotees, its success nevertheless spurred Ferry on to a second act. The image of the singer on the front of *Another Time, Another Place*, posing in a white tuxedo by a swimming pool, suggests he wasn't taking any of it too seriously, although the album was less scattergun in its choices (and ultimately less fun).

Country favourites by Willie Nelson, Kris Kristofferson and Joe South are given lounge singer makeovers, Dobie Gray's mod-soul floor-filler "The In Crowd" becomes a gritty rock anthem, but the vaudevillian misfire of "You Are My Sunshine" is best avoided. There is a suspicion that Ferry was tiring of the concept by the release of the four-track "Extended Play" EP in 1976, front-loaded by the incendiary "Let's Stick Together", a reworking of Canned Heat's "Let's Work Together", but it formed the basis of what was, to all intents and purposes, a stopgap album.

Let's Stick Together, the LP, is a cut-and-paste project, its mostly previously available cover versions augmented by re-recordings of Roxy songs ("2HB", "Chance Meeting", "Sea Breezes") that had graced singles B-sides. Questions were beginning to be asked as to whether Ferry had any intention of ever embarking on a more substantive solo career.

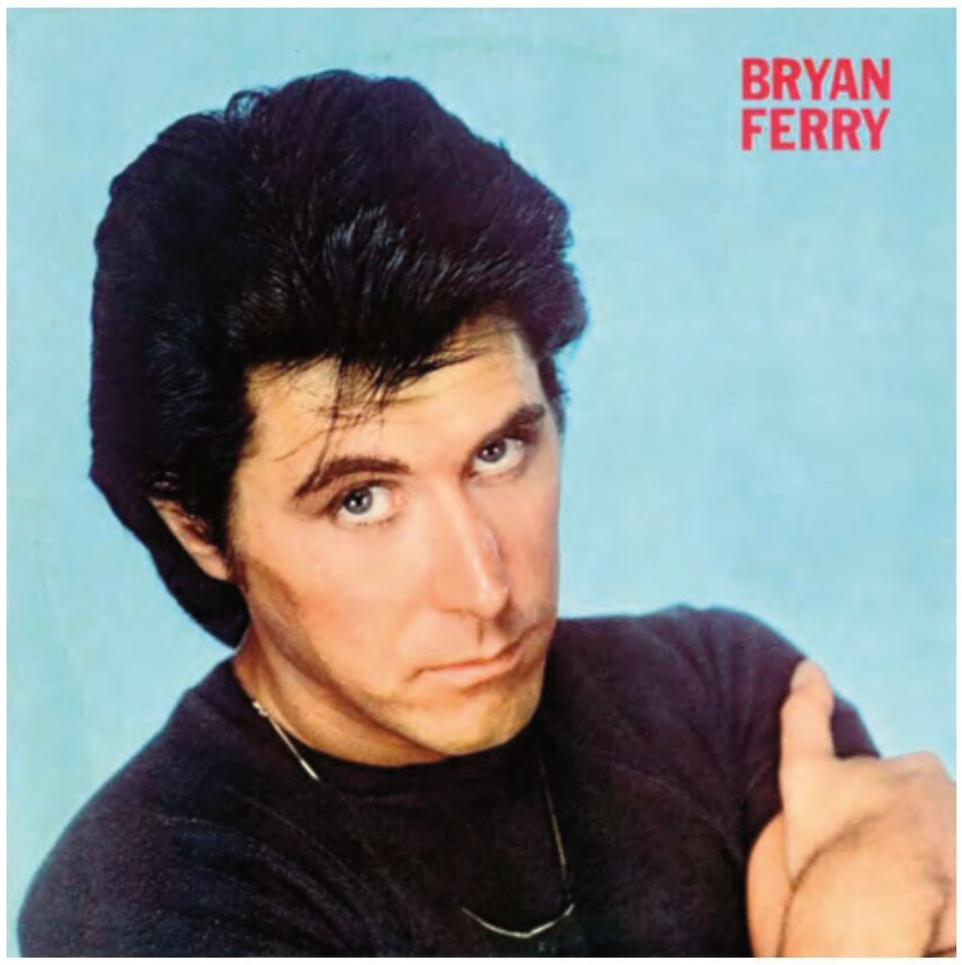
CRITICS' VERDICTS

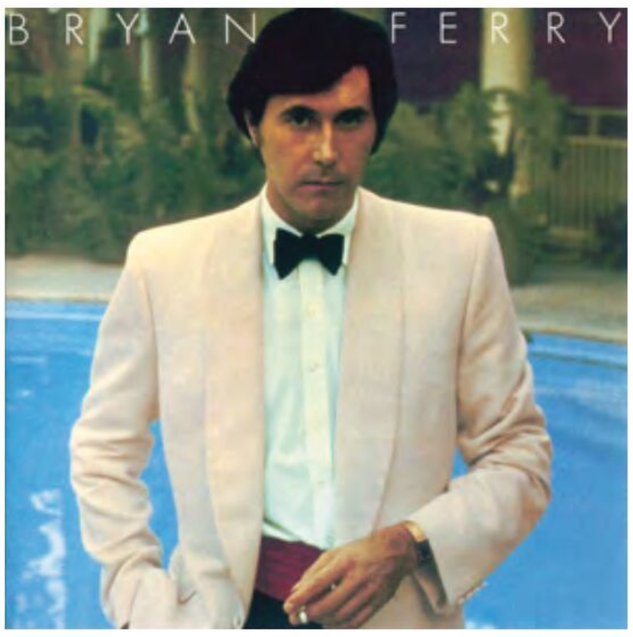
THESE FOOLISH THINGS

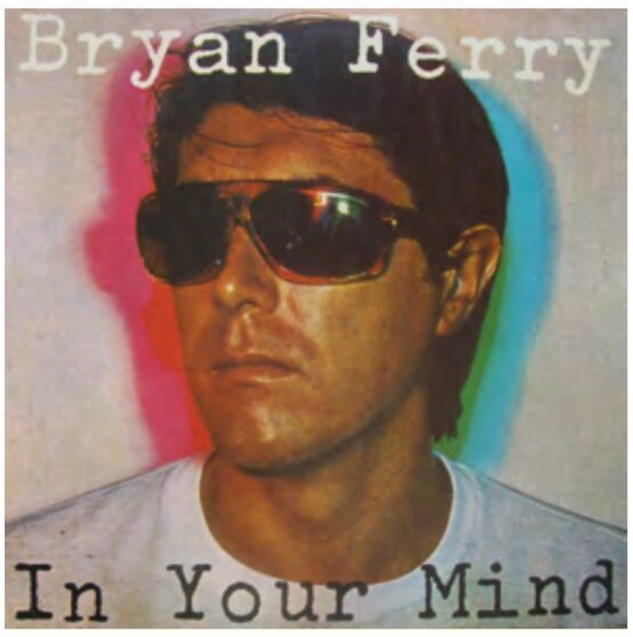
"Self-indulgence is no crime if it works for its author, but this is an undistinguished record except in its conceit."
Michael Watts, MM, 22/9/1973

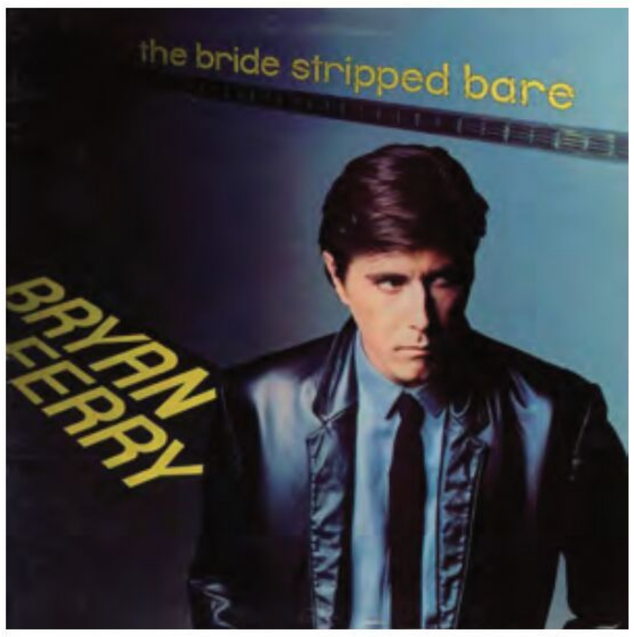
ANOTHER TIME, ANOTHER PLACE

"What we've got, punters, is Ferry Making His Move, and though I don't begrudge him his success, I wish he could have done it with a bit less style and a lot more warmth."
Tonly Tyler, NME, 29/6/1974









TRACKMARKS

THESE FOOLISH THINGS ★★★★
Label: Island
Released: 3 October 1973
Produced by: Bryan Ferry, John Porter, John Punter
Recorded at: Air Studios, London
Highest chart position: UK 5; US –

ANOTHER TIME, ANOTHER PLACE ★★★★
Label: Island
Released: 5 July 1974
Produced by: Bryan Ferry, John Punter
Recorded at: Air, Island and Ramport Studios, London
Highest chart position: UK 4; US –

LETS STICK TOGETHER ★★★
Label: Island
Released: 14 September 1976
Produced by: Chris Thomas, Bryan Ferry
Recorded at: Air and Island Studios, London
Highest chart position: UK 19; US 160

IN YOUR MIND ★★★★
Label: EG
Released: 1 February 1977
Produced by: Bryan Ferry, Steve Nye
Recorded at: Air Studios, London
Highest chart position: UK 5; US 126

THE BRIDE STRIPPED BARE ★★★★
Label: EG
Released: 1 September 1978
Produced by: Waddy Wachtel, Rick Marotta, Simon Puxley, Steve Nye, Bryan Ferry
Recorded at: Mountain Studios, Montreux, Switzerland
Highest chart position: UK 13; US 159

Up until this point it's safe to assume that Ferry was saving self-penned material for Roxy Music albums, but with the band inactive by 1977, *In Your Mind* is the first full showcase for original songs, its opening track and first single "This Is Tomorrow" (a title taken from an exhibition curated by his Newcastle University art teacher Richard Hamilton) an urgent, hard-edged statement of intent. Still, it was hard to pin Ferry down and make any strong conclusions about what path he was planning to tread.

The smoother, more ballad-oriented songs like "One Kiss" and the mid-tempo pop of "Party Doll" and "All Night Operator" come and go without making a lasting impression, while second single "Tokyo Joe" is an uncomfortable exercise in Asian stereotyping. Its non-album B-side "She's Leaving Home" (from the soundtrack of the film *All This And World War II*, archive newsreel set to Beatles covers by Ferry, Rod Stewart, Peter Gabriel and others) is a much more elegant affair.

Yet, despite that album's wholesale original material, Ferry would again return to the songs of others for 1978's *The Bride Stripped Bare*, a title taken from Marcel Duchamp's artwork *The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even*, and mentioned in the lyrics to the single "Sign Of The Times". One of four self-penned tracks, the song makes oblique references to his break-up with model Jerry Hall, a subject he returned to on "Can't Let Go" and "When She Walks In The Room".

IT WAS HARD TO PIN FERRY DOWN ABOUT WHAT PATH HE WAS PLANNING TO TREAD

THE autobiographical elements of Ferry's own songs are arguably compounded by some of his covers choices, most obviously The Velvet Underground's "What Goes On" and Otis Redding's "That's How Strong My Love Is". There are further forays into soul for Sam & Dave's "Hold On I'm Coming" and Al Green's "Take Me To The River", the latter overshadowed by the Talking Heads version released the same year.

Although it received generally good reviews, the public weren't as enamoured, and the album fell short of the UK Top 10. Of its four singles, only "Sign Of The Times" scraped into the Top 40. With the benefit of hindsight, Ferry believes he was swimming against a rising tide of punk and new wave – artists who'd considered him a hero in his role with Roxy Music.

"I felt it was the first grown-up record I'd ever made, but people didn't want grown-up anymore," he told *The Independent* in 2000. "It's a shame, because one hit on it would have made all the difference. 'Sign Of The Times' actually referred to the whole snarling punk attitude, but the irony of a guy in a suit singing that song totally passed people by."

It would be an exaggeration to say Ferry's solo career had stalled, but it had plainly fallen short of his own expectations. Within weeks of *The Bride Stripped Bare* reaching record stores he would return to the studio to start work on a new Roxy Music album, and it would be another seven years until he'd step outside the comfort of the band dynamic again.

"I put a hundred percent into everything"

Solo artist, Roxy frontman… how does BRYAN FERRY keep it all together? As the band embrace America and ready Country Life, the ambitious singer shows a vulnerable side. "I'm the most sensitive person in the world," he says, "so I've had to develop a hard shell."

TAKEN FROM
MELODY MAKER
18/05/1974

BRYAN FERRY was exhausted. Utterly. Not much lounging for the lounge lizard this week. All go. Up at dawn to another city. Another round of interviews. Another airplane. Another late night. Another early call. Six days on end.

Somehow his black hair maintains its usual crisp quiff even if the eyes blink a lot and need a good rub to stop the lids from clamping together. A cup of tea. An untidy suite. A television with picture and no sound. An album set containing 72 of Frank Sinatra's greatest hits, a prized possession indeed.

"Look, Doctor. Are we going to Los Angeles this evening or tomorrow morning? There's a girl from the publishing company coming round at a quarter to six and if she's on time we can leave in half an hour and be in Los Angeles by nine tonight."

"We'll not get anything done tonight, Bryan."

"We can get some bloody rest, Doctor."

Dr Simon Puxley, Roxy Music's British publicist, was equally weary. He'd registered in the hotel under the title of "Doctor" and the name had stuck. It seemed like a real doctor would be needed any time before the pair of them sank to their knees in exhaustion. Somehow Bryan Ferry maintained his calm, even when room service sent up the wrong order.

In the past five days he's flown from London to New York, spent a day in Cleveland, a day in Detroit and a day in Chicago, and also visited Philadelphia and Boston. Each day was crammed with press and radio interviews, and each evening was spent discovering the delights of America.

Puxley told me he's averaged two hours sleep since arriving. Ferry had done little better. The trip lasts two weeks and is entirely promotional, intended to whip up excitement over Roxy Music before their forthcoming tour.

Although they toured once, around the time of their first album, Roxy are an unknown quantity in America. The previous tour was something of a disaster, too. It was rushed and there was little promotion. This time, Ferry hopes, things will be different.

It seemed inappropriate to ask Ferry whether he liked America, but he did volunteer that the reaction towards Roxy was better than on his previous visit. There hasn't been any chart success for them but radio jocks at least seem to know who Roxy are and what music they play. Also FM stations are starting to play a Roxy record, albeit occasionally.

"The first American tour was a terrible bringdown really," says Bryan. "It was the only time we've ever been… er, not appreciated. It was sandwiched between two English tours which were rave tours and to

JOESTEVENS

Ridicule is nothing to be scared of: the Gaucho Kid outfit from the early *Country Life* tour, Birmingham Odeon, September 29, 1974

Roxy live at the Rainbow Theatre, Finsbury Park, London for ABC TV's *In Concert*, June 4, 1974.

ABC PHOTO ARCHIVES/ABC VIA GETTY IMAGES

come here and be totally unknown was obviously a bit of a downer.

"People I spoke to on that tour who had the first album never even knew we were due to play in the town on that day. What we should have done was to play in small halls rather than support big bands in the big arenas. This is what we'll do next time."

Roxy's first two albums were released in the States by Warner Bros. Now they've changed to Atlantic who have put out *Stranded* and who will soon be releasing Bryan's first solo album, *These Foolish Things*.

"The contract with Warners ran out and they didn't renew it. They felt they couldn't really do anything for us and we didn't want to stay with them anyway so we moved to Atlantic.

"The management talked to a lot of record companies, but they were keen to go with Atlantic because King Crimson are with Atlantic." (EG Management, who handle Roxy, also manage Crimson).

In effect, says Bryan, Roxy are having a fresh start. A short US tour for them begins at the end of this month, and the important thing about it is that they'll be playing to an audience who paid to come and see them, and not to see another act further up the bill.

"One would expect a more appreciative audience, and also the music we're playing now is a much better live performance than it was the first time round.

"It was a much more sedate set before but now, with two more albums' worth of material to choose from, there are far more numbers suitable for a live performance. I think there's a certain type of person in America who's been with us since the very beginnings; a real music freak.

"There's a cult following for us and I think it'll get bigger and bigger. Whether it'll ever be big enough to reach commercially successful proportions, I don't know.

"My view of American audiences is that they are incredibly conservative. I think that when they went through all the social changes of the '60s they seemed to create a new style which was equally as rigid as the one they left.

"Our things haven't been successful here in large numbers because we are something new again. We are too different for them.

"We were very fortunate to be successful from the first record onwards in England, maybe because of the mechanics of the English system. There isn't a huge rock press over here, and in England we were always written about from the very beginning so people were aware of us before even the first album came out.

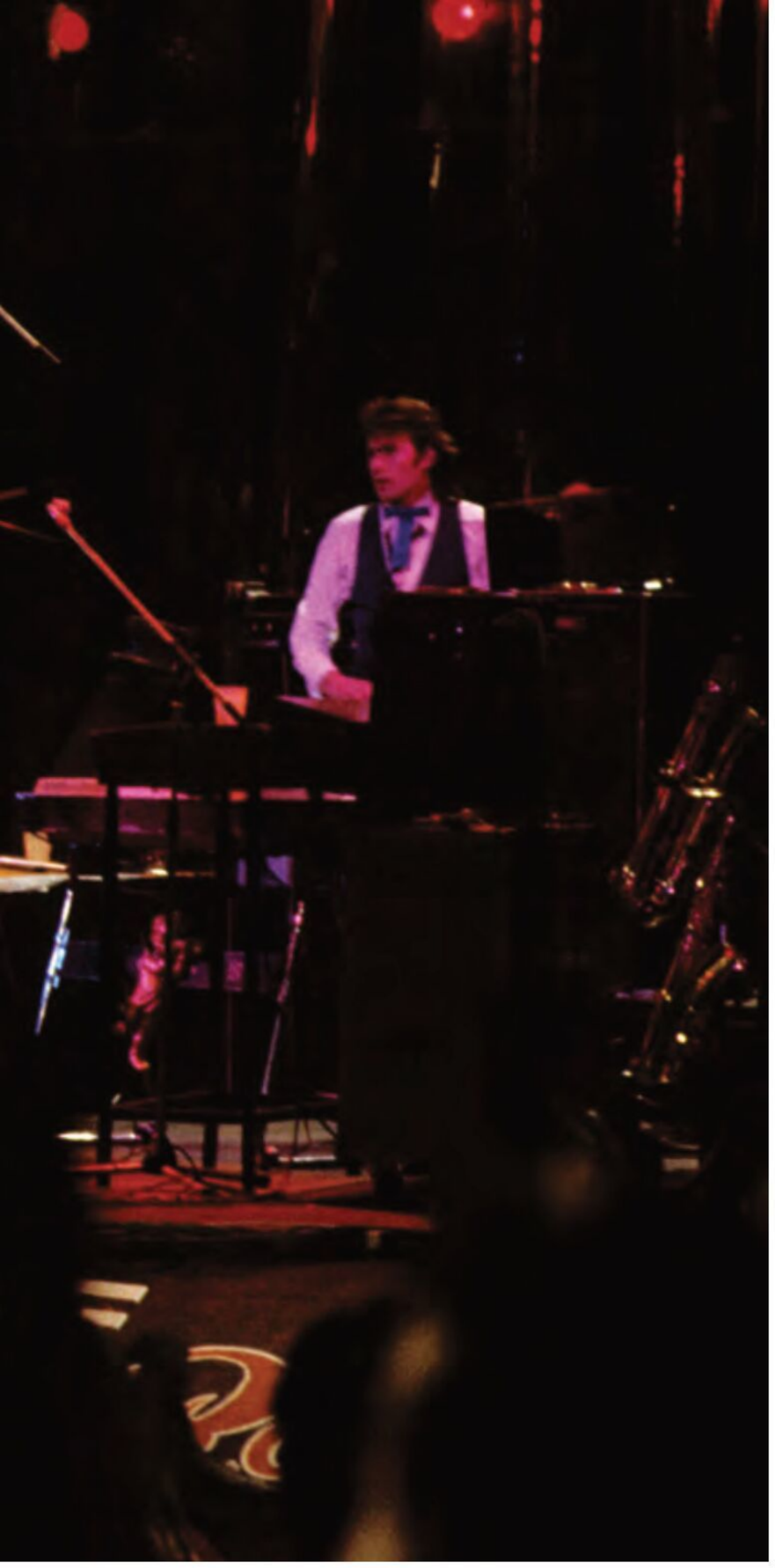
"Here people are more influenced by FM radio and they're more unadventurous in their outlook. There seems to be a dreadful musical snobbery between AM and FM radio and Roxy doesn't seem to fall into either of these accepted categories. We're too weird for AM, and considered too flash and too image-conscious for some of the FM stations."

Bryan does not intend to push overhard with Roxy in America; he won't become a slave to ambition by bringing the band back for endless back-breaking tours until they finally top the bill at Madison Square Garden, which is surely the premier ambition of most British rock bands.

"It would seem to me a terrible shame if the albums we've produced should disappear without trace here. Putting aside the commercial reason – obviously I'd like to sell a lot of albums and make a lot of money – I think the albums are good and people would enjoy hearing them. It's just a question of getting better known before they'll go out and buy them.

"But I don't think I can maintain that pressure on tour for a long period. Whenever I sing on stage I knock myself out totally and I can't do that for three or four weeks at a stretch. I'd kill myself by this Christmas if I tried that. I'm not the sort of person who would hold back one night because the following night was a more important gig.

"Once I get on stage I throw myself totally into it and when I get off, I'm drained. That's what any emotional kind of singer ought to do anyway. When we do get over here we'll try to get some television, and just play in smallish halls in key cities. I don't like the idea of playing in large halls anyway because I prefer to work in close-up."



Bryan likes America, this time round anyway. Despite his exhaustion at the rigorous schedule Atlantic have set him, he's aware that conditions are better now.

"This is only the second time I've been here but I like it considerably more than I did the first time. Obviously some cities are more pleasant to visit than others and obviously it depends on what conditions you're visiting the country under but this time I'm being treated with a lot more respect."

Bryan feels sure that if Roxy Music attacked America in the conventional way, or spent a year over here touring all the time they would attain a high degree of success, but he's not prepared to do this because other factors would suffer.

"Americans aren't so preoccupied with style as the English are, but it could be changing. When I was in Detroit, I got a phone call from Canada during a radio interview and this kid said that he cut out photographs of me and took them along to his hairdressers so that he could imitate my hairstyle. I was very flattered."

CHRIS CHARLESWORTH

TAKEN FROM
MELODY MAKER
06/07/1974

IF you're gonna be the sharpest blade on the block you've got to move fast, and keep at least three moves in front of everyone else.

You need distance, you can't afford to keep looking back over your shoulder. You have to keep the momentum building all the time, creating your own level of reality as you move. Speed is essential. You're a moving target, and if you slow down for a minute you're out. Available for every hit in the business... and who wants to be the next dead pigeon on 42nd Street?

Bryan Ferry has all the style in the world.

After being taken into the back room for a critical working over for *These Foolish Things* one might have expected Ferry to have faltered. No way. He kept his head, and with Roxy Music produced *the* album of 1973, *Stranded*.

Next week sees the release of his second solo album, enigmatically titled *Another Time, Another Place*. It's a different bunch of bananas altogether, although the same concepts which informed the Roxy albums and *Foolish Things* apply here. It's a much stronger album than the previous outing, much closer to Ferry's preoccupations and obsessions with Roxy Music. Ferry himself agrees that the album is more powerful than its predecessor.

"It's generally a lot heavier all round, I think. It's heavyweight where the first one was lightweight or bantamweight, or whatever. The mood of a lot of the songs is quite heavy...

"The first album, for me, was only half successful, because I tend to like more and more the songs I did changes to rather than those I left virtually the same as the original records. With this one I tried to do a totally new arrangement on every number, and put as much of me on it as possible."

THE album is therefore much closer to the Roxy products in that each song becomes a cameo performance, with each cameo coming eventually together to form a coherent whole.

We find Ferry stepping in and out of different roles, appearing in different contexts, carrying the whole thing out with great precision. It's his favourite kind of texture to work with, he says.

"I'm very conscious of building up a picture, because I do see things in visual terms. It helps, the stronger the idea you have before you take a song into the studio, the more complete it feels. It's a very curious business.

"I don't know what other people do, whether they just sit and mess around, and gradually build something without knowing where it's going... it sounds like that to me. But if you have a strong idea, no matter how many curious overdubs you put on, it will still keep its identity."

Two of the tracks on the album, "Fingerpoppin'" and "Walk A Mile In My Shoes", are like flashbacks to Ferry's days with Gas Board, the band he used to front at the Newcastle A'Gogo.

"That's a photograph of me taken in '67, which is quite interesting to compare with some psychedelic pictures of contemporaries... I never went through that at all. I'm wearing a midnight blue mohair suit in that picture, with a button-down collar shirt, posing against a Studebaker. I was much more flash then than I am now."

Had he been influenced at all by West Coast music during that period?

"Oh yeah, very much at that point, which explains the pink shirts, white jeans and sneakers. We were all very much into The Beach Boys' music at that time. Any surfing music was considered to be the hippest thing around. It was the American Dream for us... as you can imagine, being stuck up in Newcastle."

Ferry has always admitted to the influence of Americana, and the disposable mythologies of Hollywood. But more than that, in songs like "In Every Dream Home A Heartache" and "Mother Of Pearl", he comes very close to creating a rock parallel with the erotic textures of American pop artists like Tom Wesselman and, more particularly, Richard Lindner.

"It's very interesting that you should mention Lindner; now he's very 'In Crowd'. I think that track conjures up a kind of image rather like his pictures– that kind of neo-Berlin kind of thing... It's the kind of thing one feels one can offer with a European intelligence, so to speak."

What about the Velvets, how important an influence had they been?

"They must have been an influence, but not as much as one might imagine. I was aware of them from the first album, although I like them much more now than I did then. No musicians that I knew liked them.

"It was just artists who were friends that had the records, because it was all part of the Warhol spin-off. I never really spent a great deal of time listening to them, because a few years after that first album, when I heard some of the other things, I thought they were too close to what I wanted to do at the time. I just thought, 'Oh God, I mustn't listen to this...'"

The remodelled version of Kris Kristofferson's "Help Me Make It Through The Night" elevates the song from its essential rock'n'roll experience to a much more considered statement, closer to "Psalm", and the almost Beardsley-like iconography of that song.

"The best songs for me were pre-Beatles"
BRYAN FERRY

"It's strange how the most degenerate kind of characters can flirt with religion like that. What's always interested me is the gradual process of a lot of poets and the phases they go through. Like intense love poetry, over 20 years or so it can become stranger and stranger, and more introspective, until it reaches this amazing religious intensity. John Donne, for instance, was always the most amazing one for me."

Ferry's treatment of Dylan's "It Ain't Me, Babe," achieves a similar effect. Dylan, in fact, is probably the one contemporary songwriter that Ferry has any respect for.

"I'm much more at home working with a craftsmanlike written song like "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes", which has an incredibly clever lyric. It's a piece of poetry in a way. The people who did the best songs were, for me, pre-Beatles.

"After '64, and the Beatles and Dylan, it became more or less obligatory for performers to write their own songs, whether they could nor not. And most often they can't, in my opinion."

It often seems that Ferry is using his music,

not as an end in itself, but as an attempt to create an identity for himself, a reality beneath all the style: "It's the only way I can. My work is the only justification for doing anything really, sitting here talking to you, or walking down the street. Therefore my work is very important to me. Although I have to laugh at it or whatever, to keep a certain perspective.

"It's the only thing I have any pride in, I suppose, because I'm not much of a social creature. Therefore, my work has to stand for everything I'm about, really."

ALLAN JONES

TAKEN FROM
MELODY MAKER
03/08/1974

THERE isn't anything quite like that pop phenomenon, the meteoric rise from rags to riches, to cause hackles to rise among a nation's greasy, if worthy, truckers. And there's probably never been a band, in the entire history of rock, that's made that skyward move as rapidly as did Roxy Music back in '72. Rock by numbers. In a nutshell, that's the hard-grafting rock circuit view of Roxy. A foppish delight to tickle the fancies of Chelsea dilletantes and debutantes over cups of Earl Grey tea, perchance, but without any musical substance. I mean, no dues-paying, right?

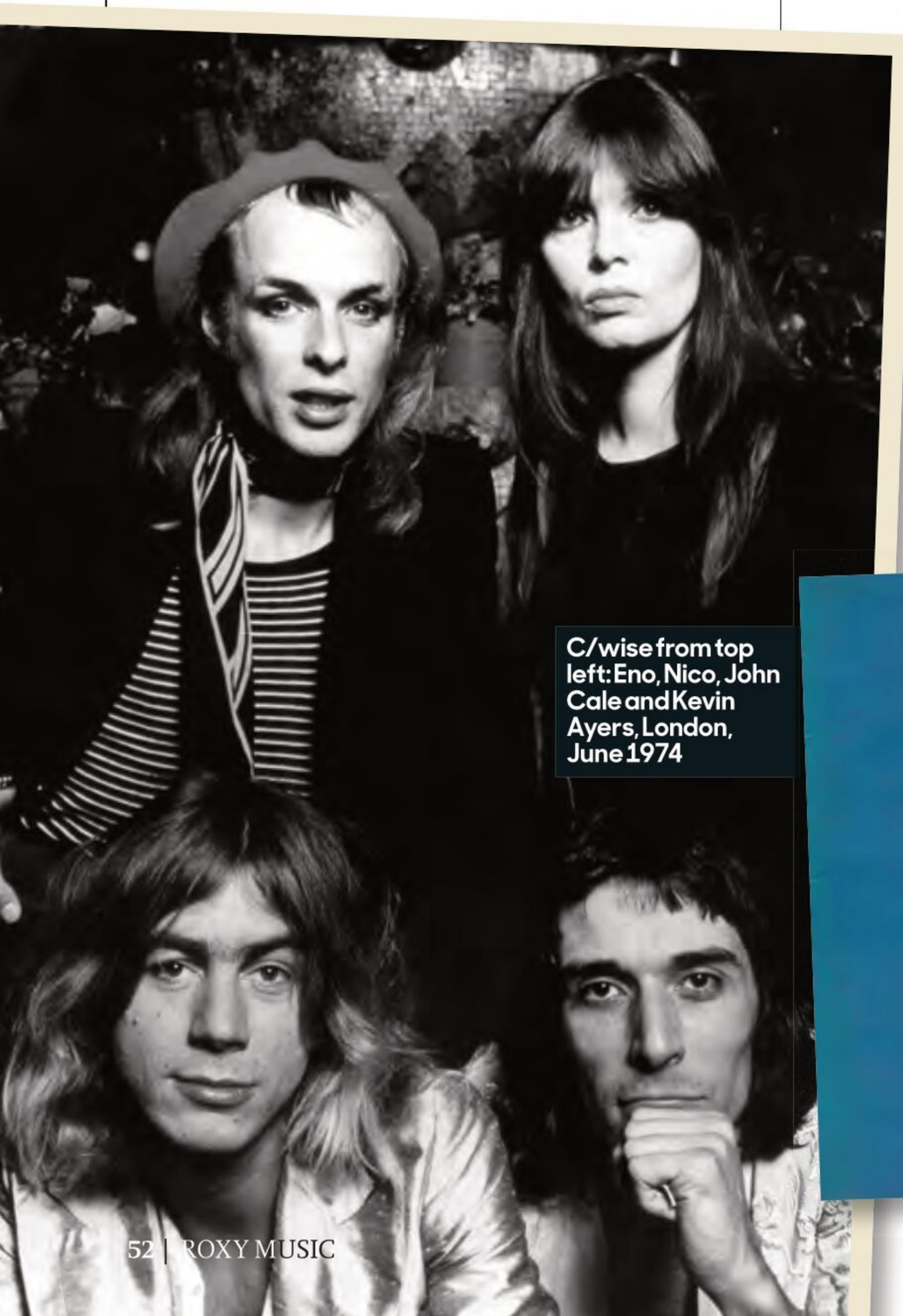
Well, wrong, actually. Mackay and Ferry may well have their roots in teaching institutions rather than grass roots funk bands, but drummer Paul Thompson for one slugged his way through singularly mediocre outfits like the Influence and Smokestack for longer than he cares to remember.

Which brings us to Phil Manzanera. For Phil's entrance on to the musical scene, with a band called Quiet Sun, was at a level of virtuosity sufficient to send most yawn-inducing pub rockers scurrying back to the brickyards that spawned them. Genuinely ahead of their time, members of Quiet Sun went on to play with Robert Wyatt's Matching Mole, Mal Dean's Amazing Band and Gong. (Demon bass player Bill MacCormick also mysteriously wound up as Liberal candidate for Beckenham, but that's another story.) Suffice to say that when fingers are pointed, one person that's not going to have a troubled conscience is Manzanera.

"See, I've never had any doubts about my musical knowledge or taste," said Phil quietly, sounding more modest than that statement might look in print. "I've always been able to enjoy things that are supposedly 'heavy' or difficult, and enjoy equally the most straightforward pop singles, the kind of stuff that most musicians would never admit to liking. But I can understand the prejudice against us, because I know that I'm always suspicious of unanimously rave reviews in the musical press."

In the studios, the problem caused by the lack of a permanent bass player doesn't exist because John Gustafson late of Quatermass plays all the bass tracks, and admirably, too. Roxy'd sign him up for good at the drop of hat, but Gus has a more lucrative commitment with Shawn Phillips, one of America's premier folkies. Anyhow, mention of studios is as good a way as any to digress to Manzanera's recent recording activities, that is, Andy Mackay's *In Search of Eddie Riff*, John Cale's forthcoming album and a new Roxy Music venture. What had Phil learnt from the Cale sessions, on which the Roxy guitarist functioned as producer with the artist and Eno?

"The unexpected, basically. Working on the album involved a whole new way of thinking. Much of it was very tense, continually bringing forward ideas and suggestions. And even if 99 per cent of them were unworkable or impossible, still struggling on. We used Archie Legget on bass, 'cos I'd enjoyed his work on Kevin Ayers' albums, and Archie brought along Freddie Smith who played all the drum tracks apart from one which Charles Hayward (the original Quiet Sun drummer) played. It's an excellent album, actually. Every single song on it is a winner. If John can just keep it together and latch on to the media side of the business it's all there, y'see. If people just get a chance to hear it, I'm sure they will all rush out and snap it up ecstatically."



C/wise from top left: Eno, Nico, John Cale and Kevin Ayers, London, June 1974

At this stage, it's difficult for Phil to say too much about the new Roxy album, being halfway through recording at AIR Studios; they've been there since July 1, and are working Monday through Saturday in systematic manner. This time, there are five of Ferry's songs, and Manzanera and Mackay take two credits apiece.

"We're only just past the sketch stage at present, the tracks are gradually being built up with overdubs until the picture emerges complete. But with Roxy, the style or the sound is always very difficult to pinpoint. I mean, I'd love to be able to tell you that there's five uptempo rockers and four laidback country tunes, but it's never that easy."

Manzanera, curiously, feels that there's a parallel between the way that freejazz musicians work and the way that Roxy record.

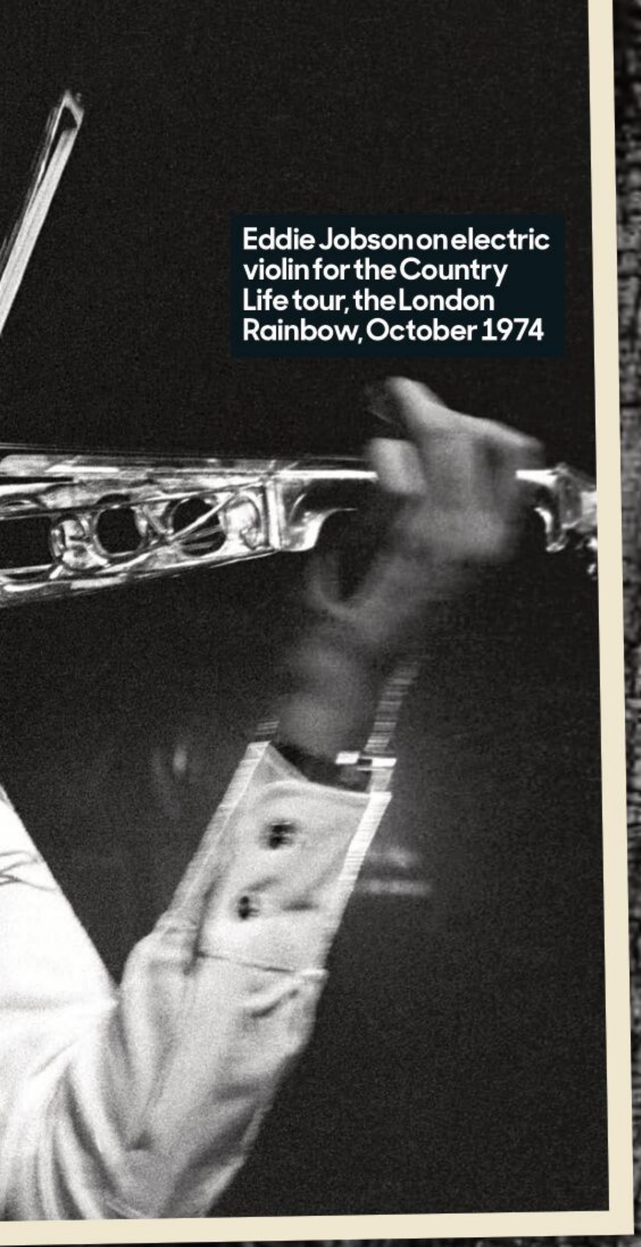
"With free music, basically, you have to accept what comes up for better or for worse, and at the outset, nobody knows exactly what's going to happen. All right, we arrive at the studio with our various demos, but it's never a case of, 'Oh, if it doesn't work we'll try something else.' Y'know, this is it. No alternatives, and you have to make the best use of the material that you have. And you keep sifting, putting synthesiser here, or violin here, and it's just a continual growing process, until you realise you've finished."

And part of the reason that it generally works so well is that Roxy aren't a band that hangs out together when they're not on tour. A case of the family that doesn't play together stays together. "We keep it fresh by doing lots of other activities when we're not together, and then when we finally do meet up, there's a new wealth of experience to bring to bear on the music."

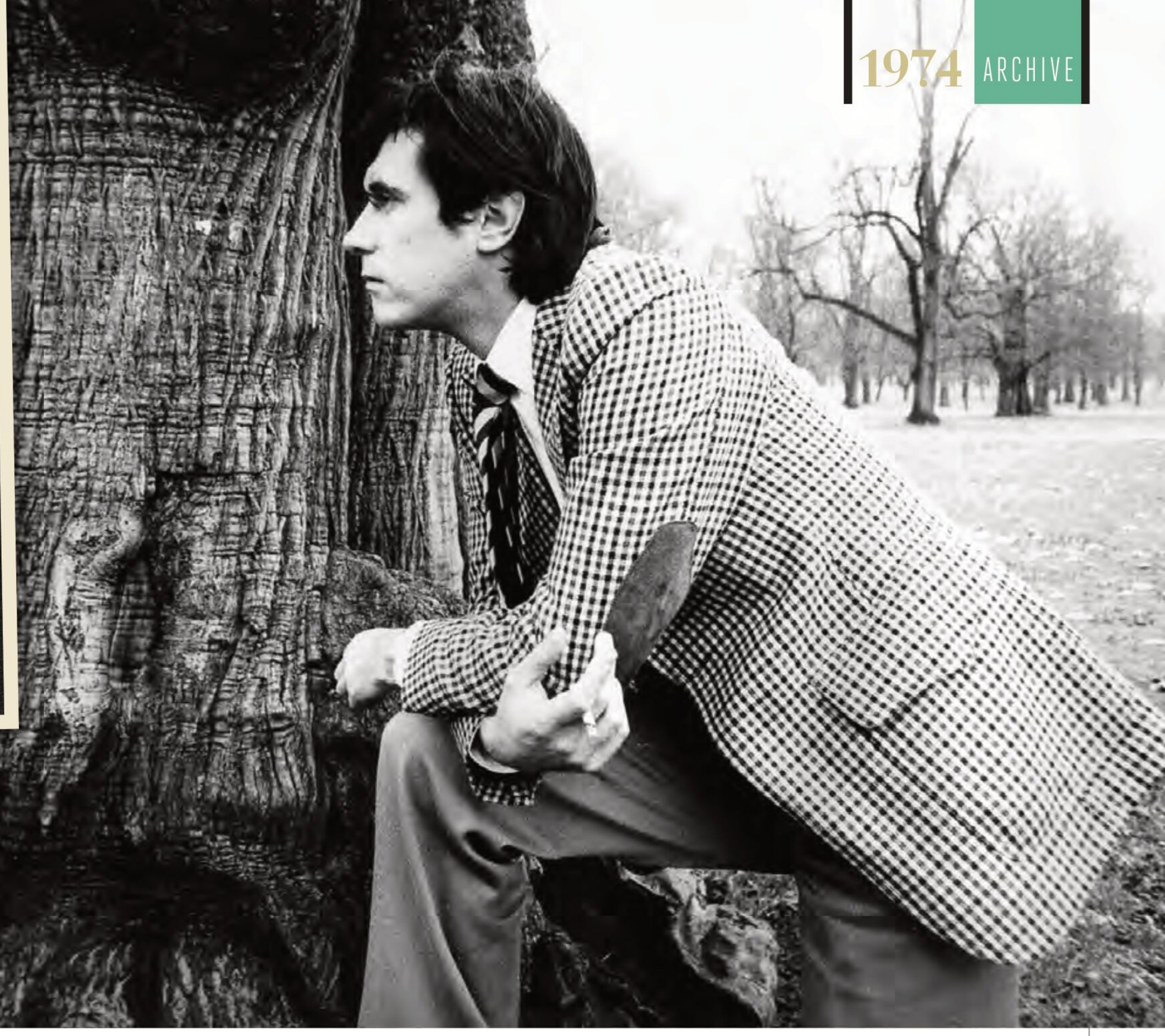
And for the future? Well, in the tradition founded by Eno, Bryan Ferry and Andy Mackay, Manzanera is making tentative plans for his solo debut album.

"I realise that quite a lot of musicians would be shocked if I put out some of the things that I wrote with Quiet Sun, so. I think that's what I'll do." As

GEMS/REDFERNS, IAN DICKSON/REDFERNS



Eddie Jobson on electric violin for the Country Life tour, the London Rainbow, October 1974



Country life for a country squire: Ferry takes time out in 1974

yet, Phil hasn't approached any musicians to work with him on the album, but he says he'd love to have MacCormick play, and Mike Ratledge, too. "I've heard that Bill's just about given up playing bass, but even if that's true, I'd like to have him around while I'm recording, just for his ideas. As for Mike Ratledge, that'd be a purely selfish choice. There's few things that I enjoy more than long Mike Ratledge solos, so I'd be happy to have one on the record."

Any plans to work live outside of Roxy gigs? "Well, I have had offers to do that. John Cale asked me to play the Rainbow gig with Kevin Ayers, Nico and Eno, but I figured that with Ollie Halsall and Mike Oldfield there, I wouldn't really be needed and anyhow it was a crucial time in rehearsing for the album. But sure, I'd like to do the odd concert providing I could get to do them with some musicians that I admired. I would be into doing a gig with me being promoted as the star, though."

Being reminded of Phil's catholic tastes by the economy and excellence of his record collection, I asked if there were any guitarists that he still turned to for inspiration.

"Not necessarily for inspiration, just out of pure interest. I like the playing on the Maria Muldaur album, there's some beautiful Amos Garrett solos on that. And Fripp is great. He's really the master of technique as far as I'm concerned, and I wouldn't try to compete with him. Of course, my biggest embarrassment was saying that Randy California was the world's best and then having to eat my words when he came over here for that Spirit tour and played so awfully."

STEVE LAKE

TAKEN FROM NME 21/12/1974

BRYAN FERRY is worried. To be more exact, he's apprehensive. Well, wouldn't you be with the eyes of the rock world watching your every move as a solo artist? And now having to go out and do it on stage? Stranded for your pleasure. The lone gaucho mooches restlessly around, pressing push-buttons on his colour TV, eventually settling down to watch the basketball. "This used to be my game you know, at school." Brawn Fury at outside left? That would bring the crowds back. Today, Saturday, has been a Day Of Rest, saving grace before the onslaught and he needs it, 'cos he's jaded after a European tour and constant rehearsals for the Big Events. The Albert Hall? "I haven't been there yet. I'm not going until they push me on stage."

If that seems to lack a certain confidence, don't forget, he's really on his own for the first time, although he draws obvious succour from the calibre of tested musicianship around him. "Martyn Ford's doing arrangements. He's invaluable – not just from the conducting point of view. When I want a particular instrument or sound, Martyn knows who to get, he's a fixer.

"Basically, I'm using the people who played on the albums, including the orchestra. That's 55 people. John Porter on guitar, of course, he's amazing. The guy lives music and never gets the credit he deserves. Ridiculously underrated." The Great Paul Thompson, bassist John Wetton and Eddie Jobson will also be along – no surprise there – and of the regular Roxy cohorts only Andy Mackay is absent. (But then he didn't play on the solo discs either.)

Nor will Bryan be at the keyboards, as he's employed specialists for the purpose. "My piano-playing has improved, at least it's Grade Two." What's the purpose of these three Ferry solo concerts? "They're really test gigs. I like to think if they're successful I'll do some more next year. It was a weird situation to be in, two gold albums which were selling without live promotion. December seemed the best time to perform them." As for working with bigger bands in the future, the idea is exciting but impracticable on an extended scale. "I like the economy of small bands; just three or four people can be very dynamic, and then it's also cheaper. We're touring with so many musicians on this thing that I'm actually losing money. That's why I couldn't have a huge itinerary, though it's nice for a special occasion. I'll get a kick out of it."

"We're touring with so many musicians, I'm losing money"

BRYAN FERRY

On a long-term basis, the idea of doing standards, being a modern Sinatra, is

PENNIE SMITH

Ferry at home in London, January 10, 1974

intrinsically appealing. "Sure that's great but for me it's still more important to write. I'm the only one who knows how it should be done. With other people's material, it's already scored and I find it interesting to inflict my style and interpretation. There's normal procedure.

"There are many beautiful songs I'd like to do – so why limit oneself? I'm all for self expansion. A solo album with my stuff and a big band would be great – if I had the time – because it's nice to work with as many different people as possible, there are far more creative opportunities open. Unfortunately, a lot of people misinterpret what one's doing."

AT this juncture we break for tea, Bryan stalking down a programme on teenybopper idols which he watches with gentlemen's relish, laughing discreetly at some of the more ludicrous aspects of six-year-olds freaking out. Our discourse resumes on the implications of his last remark, the supposed friction between himself and Roxy Music, which was inspired partially by an over-furtive press, and partially by some ambiguous publicity statements.

Ferry thinks the situation to be inflated artifice. "There's no friction at all, though naturally I'm speaking for myself. I really am a peaceful type type of person, I hate scenes or arguments – on the other hand, I never back down, mostly as I like to have an uncomplicated hold on what's happening. The press do the stirring as it makes good copy. In Europe, we didn't have this at all."

Ferry is genuinely upset by unfounded comments and highly sensitive to criticism. "I'm the most sensitive person in the world so I've had to develop a hard shell. I mean, criticism can be flattering, too, because you're being noticed. On the other hand, I tend to resent it because I'm very self-critical myself so I usually know if it's valid. "I can be objective before anyone else – it's when others appear biased, deliberately finding things to be snide about.

"But there again, one shouldn't worry, except that so many people read it. Still, if they're intelligent, they shouldn't be unduly influenced." Like the man said, he's stubborn. The Gaucho episode, a source of delight on the last tour, is one treated with an unqualified braggadoccio. Toking a mean Chesterfield, Ferry snarls: "I wouldn't back down on that because there was a *point* to it. I could have had an easier passage playing safe, wearing a white tuxedo 'til it died the death, but I've always tried to change the image. People are generally so conservative. The reason why I wore it was that you don't see many people walking down the street like that. The Gaucho bit was blowsy, romantic, it fitted the songs."

Douglas Fairbanks, John Gilbert, Rudolph Valentino and Bryan Ferry: the Four Horsemen Of The Apocalypse? "Sure... swashbuckling." (Makes buckle-swashing gestures). "I tempered that – insurance if you like – with the other thing which you could interpret in various ways. It was either the Third Reich, traffic cop or customs frontier guard, depending. Actually, uniforms are of interest to people fascinated by sexual imagery, clothes imagery, breeches and so on – not necessarily me. I also like straightforward, archetypal clothes. The tuxedo's a very classic example. It's just an alternative to going on stage dressed like this," (indicating present denim apparel), "which is all right, but quite camp for me now."

What always intrigues me about Ferry The Performer is his distanced stance and the conglomeration of poses, almost as if Stanislavski had put him through his paces. A method in his madness. At the Rainbow recently, he'd slouched on like a slow-motion Dean in the middle of a fit of pique. Ferry rejects the suggestion of a synthesised routine. "The movements are ones that seem right. They feel OK. I don't really notice them unless I see a film of the show."

One conclusion many had jumped to was that A Ferry Diversified was A Ferry Weakened. This is smartly refuted: "There's no differentiation of energy in these projects. I put a hundred per cent into everything. Obviously Roxy takes up more time with the writing." Hence the increasingly democratic song breakdown? "Partly. Also the others – Andrew and Phil – want to contribute. That's fine, as long as I have control over the material that goes in. I feel the need to guide the course of an album.

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

They bring their songs or ideas – and I choose what I can best employ myself in."

While Ferry isn't a humble person, neither is he falsely modest, and he won't yet be drawn on *Country Life*. "It's too early to say whether I'm pleased with it. I think I am. Basically, it was a real sweat to do and I had to make time for the lyrics. In future I hope to have the material ready when we go into the studio – otherwise it becomes a millstone. "Again there are the pressures of an audience and a company that both want the product." Claims that *Country Life* was named after an obscure reference to metaphysicist John Donne are incorrect ("I read that, too"). In fact, the riddle is solved by a brief look around Bryan's front room, where three or four copies of the famous same-name magazine are scattered.

"I'm an avid reader of glossies and that's one of the great eccentrics. There was also some sexual allusion – I've always been intrigued by the Profumo affair. "The cover contrasts with the usual *Country Life* photography, where you normally have characters shooting ducks or jumping over fences in top hats. While I'm pleased with the controversy, I don't think the picture's depraved... a bit seedy perhaps, but you see far worse things than that."

The Roxy covers are getting more obscene though? "Maybe. Well, it does tie up – if I may use that phrase – with the others in terms of a series." In terms of progression and quality, *Country Life* seems (to me) to be Roxy Music's master work –yet with that definitive musically idiosyncratic aura which has prevented anyone covering the material. "It's the ultimate flattery, being covered. Have you heard Mike McGear's version of 'Sea Breezes'? I'll play it to you."

While McCartney's string arrangement blasts out, Ferry taps out the rhythm happily, delighted at the compliment. "On the new album I could see 'If It Takes All Night' and 'A Really Good Time' being done by others, I'd like that. I like language and English is a beautiful one to work with, but it gets harder to retain a fresh, semi-adolescent thrill, mostly because a lot of critics are so blasé and cynical. However, when you find that what you've written is important to someone, then one gets involved. If it means something to them you've got a fan for life, at least they're interested in what you have to say. Then I feel the lyrics should always stand up to reading, I take a tremendous amount of care with them. It's very rarely that I leave a verse unaltered from inception."

The care he takes in shaping songs extends to his influences. "They have to be things that happen to me, things that come from within – or it's meaningless. I've always tried not to make every song centre on the same subject level. It's good to actually *write* about something, apart from love songs, like '2HB'. 'Tryptych' is religiously inspired, though not specific. It's Very Artistic, too, with the three different sound directions."

Use of puns and the depth of allusion where one line often assumes various meanings, are becoming standard trademarks of Ferry's work, and draw a large response in terms of appreciative letters. "They're real feedback – and I read them all – but at the moment, I'm too disorganised to reply to many. In fact, I'm too disorganised to reply to *any* of them." Ferry's on-stage cool, and the impression he gives of casual control doesn't always coincide with his true feelings. "I'm a very proud person – I have to be because I'm into what I'm doing completely, I'm a professional – but sometimes it would be nice to throw gigs, stalk off. The trouble is that you'd let down so many people. Ultimately one can only emulate one's own standards and mine are very severe." The mystique with which Ferry shrouds his private life serves a useful double purpose. Firstly, it's a form of protection and secondly it helps to promote the unobtainable sex-symbol figure.

"Lyrics should always stand up to reading"

BRYAN FERRY

To counter the encroaching adulation he's been forced to change his phone number (*"Wish everybody would leave me alone"*) and install an Ansafone which, when played back, revealed a mixture of bone fide messages and silly crank calls. "It goes in phases; my attitude is, since I give about 24 hours a day to the public, they should leave me alone the rest of the time. The worst aspects are when one is virtually imprisoned in an hotel or leaving concerts. That can be frightening." ✪ *MAX BELL*

IANDICKSON/REDFERNS

The eyelids have it: live at the Rainbow, October 1974

ROXY MUSIC

COUNTRY LIFE

RELEASED: NOVEMBER 22, 1974

Roxy's full-frontal assault on the mainstream continues. Inside the notorious sleeve: some of the band's finest individual moments.

BY TOM PINNOCK

"JUDGES, all sorts, have said it was a stitch-up," Bryan Ferry told *The Times* in 2009, lamenting the imprisonment of his son, fox-hunting enthusiast Otis. "The poor lad just wants to live the traditional country life."

By then, Ferry was taking the phrase to mean pursuits of the hunting, fishing and shooting variety. In the early 1970s, while the socially aspiring singer certainly read the magazine, his own tastes were for racier sport. The al fresco softcore photoshoot in Portugal that produced the cover of their fourth album was simply the latest instalment in a career that had already covered blow-up sex dolls and predatory stalkers, and, on "Re-Make/Re-Model", chanting the car registration of a woman who had taken his fancy at the Reading Festival in 1971.

Aristocracy clearly had some appeal for Ferry back in 1974, if only for the quality tailoring, but taking the name of Britain's best-known upper-class magazine for the title of Roxy's fourth album – and juxtaposing it with *that* photo, starring Can associates Eveline Grunwald and Constanze Karoli – can only have been a wry joke, an absurd prank fitting for someone taught by pop-art pioneer Richard Hamilton.

Yet, if Ferry was at this point still more of a miner's son than the type who sends his offspring to Eton, something was changing in his songs, and in Roxy's music. The previous November's *Stranded*, the band's first without Brian Eno, featured plenty of wise-cracking, surreal lines, and some deranged performances ("Mother Of Pearl"), but there was less experimentation and more streamlining evident on the likes of "Street Life" and "Serenade".

Country Life turned down the weirdness even more, presenting 10 compact, punchy songs with no room for ambient introductions à la "Ladytron", endless grooves like "The Bogus Man" or droning hymns such as "Psalm". Instead, there's the barroom boogie of "If It Takes All Night", the propulsive, distorted pop of "All I Want Is You", and the epic, energetic "The Thrill Of It All".

The latter, *Country Life*'s opener, showcases a new sophistication in Roxy's sound. Here are "Remake..."'s relentless soul beat, descending chords and Phil Manzanera's elastic soloing, but swept into a tighter, neater whole, and highlighted by Eddie Jobson's Mellotron and violin. Lyrically, too, there's a change, with Ferry's coolly melancholic words now perfectly suited to the likes of Frank Sinatra or Tony Bennett, and the title surely that of some lost American standard.

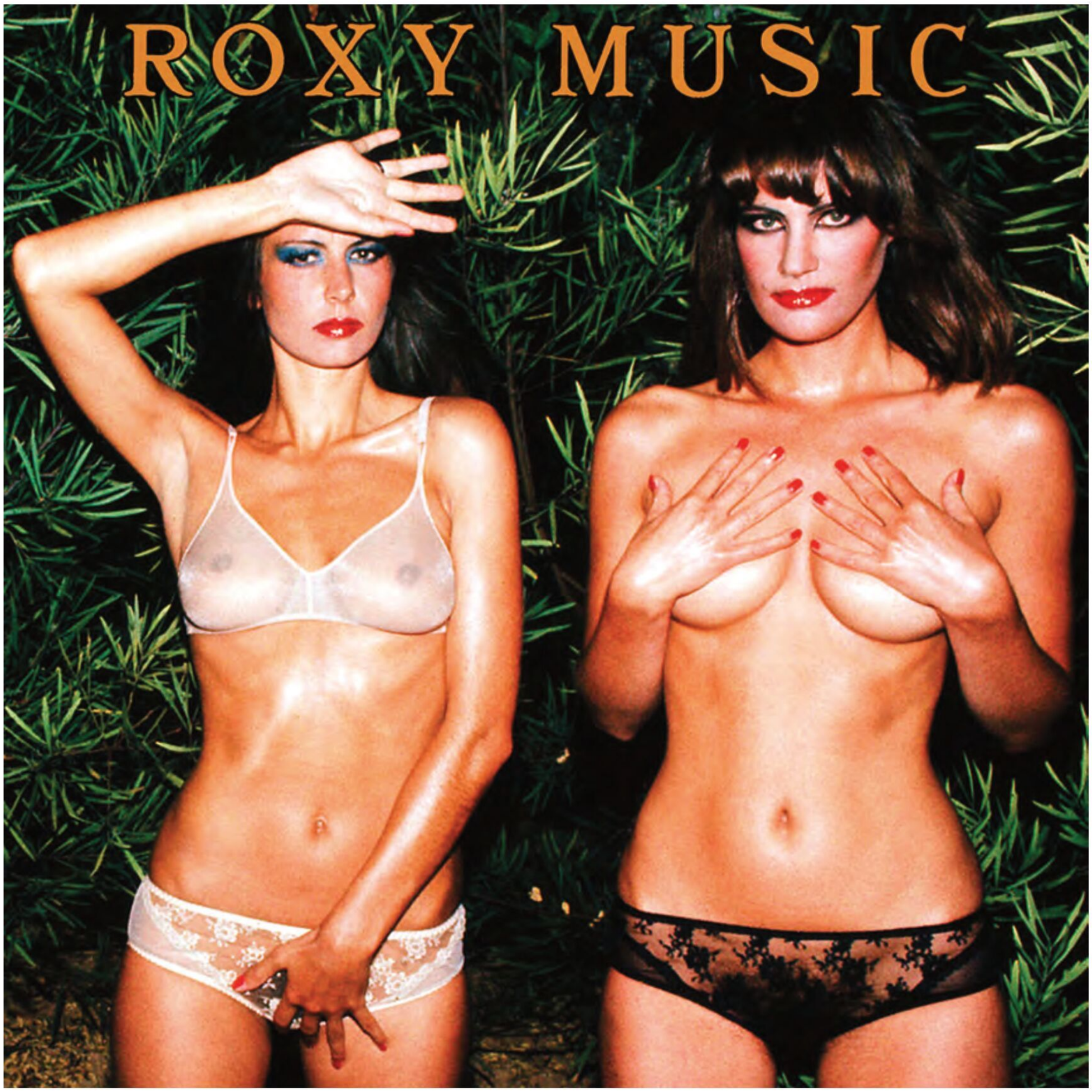
The influences at work here are clearly laid out on Ferry's first two solo albums, released in the 13 months preceding *Country Life* and featuring covers of classics such as "These Foolish Things", "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes" and "(What A) Wonderful World". A month before *Country Life*'s release, Ferry even appeared on Twiggy's TV show, duetting with the host on "Wonderful World".

Country Life's less interesting cuts generally display this new more mainstream, classic bent: "A Really Good Time" is a straighter rewrite of *Stranded*'s excellent "Just Like You", while the closing art-funk of "Prairie Rose" is strangely flat, and less than the sum of its parts. "Casanova", meanwhile, remains a little lumpen in spite of its extraordinary vocal delivery. (Ferry reworked it to finer, lighter-footed effect on 1976's *Let's Stick*

CRITICS' VERDICTS

"'Three And Nine' and 'A Really Good Time', the former with a beautiful melody courtesy of Andy Mackay... are both distinctive because of the lack of Ferry's usual literary mind games and allusions."
Allan Jones, MM, 16/11/1974

"I can't seem to recall a display of instrumental kineticism executed in the recording studio with such inspired finesse this year."
Nick Kent, NME, 9/11/1974



TRACKMARKS

1. The Thrill Of It All ★★★★
2. Three And Nine ★★★★
3. All I Want Is You ★★★★
4. Out Of The Blue ★★★★★
5. If It Takes All Night ★★★
6. Bitter-Sweet ★★★★
7. Triptych ★★★
8. Casanova ★★★
9. A Really Good Time ★★★
10. Prairie Rose ★★★

Label: Island
Produced by: Chris Thomas, John Punter, Roxy Music
Recorded at: Air Studios, London
Personnel: Bryan Ferry (vocals, keyboards, harmonica), Andy Mackay (oboe, saxophone), Phil Manzanera (guitar), Paul Thompson (drums), Eddie Jobson (violin, synthesiser, keyboards), John Gustafson (bass)
Highest chart position: UK 3; US 37

Together.) The medieval "Triptych" is braver, certainly, but even its contrasting moods and enigmatic lyrics about the crucifixion can't make it an essential Roxy track.

That these four songs are all on Side Two doesn't help the flow of the record, which is grossly frontloaded. But what a stunning imbalance: along with "The Thrill Of It All", *Country Life* lifts off with four Roxy peaks. "Three And Nine" mixes country rock, blues and early music; there's also room for a couple of wonderful false endings, a few warped drum fills from Paul Thompson and some insistent synth sounds bubbling up through the stew. "*I'm not so special,*" croons Ferry, as he addresses the formative pleasures of the cinema, "*you're a misfit too.*"

The following "All I Want Is You" is an infectious delight driven by Manzanera's chords and unhinged soloing, and earned the band another spot on *Top Of The Pops* (apparently recorded on the same day their frontman performed Dylan's "It Ain't Me Babe" solo on *The Russell Harty Show*). "*Don't want to learn about etiquette from glossy magazines,*" sings Ferry. "*Why should I try to talk correct, like they do in other scenes?*" That this working-class Geordie would soon be talking like John Cleese playing Robin Hood in *Time Bandits* doesn't diminish this yearning song's impact.

Out of "All I Want Is You"'s final clanging chord comes the album's absolute highlight, and indeed, one of Roxy's greatest songs. Laced with psychedelic phasing, "Out Of The Blue"'s beautifully sour intro is led by Andy Mackay's oboe and John Gustafson's bass, before the song bursts into a fidgety, technicolour verse. Ferry is singing, opaquely and slightly condescendingly, to someone "*so unsure, always confused*" in their "*ivory tower*" with their "*twisted smile*". As suddenly as the stately, half-speed chorus enters, though, something changes and "*out of the blue, love came rushing in*", Ferry's euphoria echoed by a wild Manzanera lead. The final 85 seconds are dominated by Eddie Jobson's echoed and phased electric violin, an instrumental break as sublime as the building outro of "For Your Pleasure", or the massed, absurd solos on "Editions Of You".

SOMETHING WAS CHANGING IN FERRY'S SONGS, AND IN ROXY'S MUSIC

THE saving grace of Side Two, meanwhile, is "Bitter-Sweet", a Germanic cousin of *Stranded*'s "A Song For Europe", with German lyrics translated by the album's cover stars. "*Well, this is such a sad affair,*" begins Ferry, sounding like the aural equivalent of some crumpled hero in a '40s film noir, before the song transforms into a noisy Wagnerian march. "*Mein lullaby, liebchen,*" rasps Ferry, before the clamour dies down. "*How rich in contrast love can be.*"

If not an entirely consistent work, *Country Life* certainly contains some of the group's finest moments. Their leader's double-front attack on the public, with two solo albums and two Roxy LPs in just over a year, proved a success too, with *Country Life* being their first album to hit the US Top 40, and their second-highest-charting in the UK until 1980's *Flesh And Blood*.

Incidentally, November 21, 1974's issue of *Country Life*, emerging a day before its namesake album, featured a painting of a red-jacketed huntsman surrounded by hounds; a premonition, perhaps, of the world that Ferry was gradually entering, a zone where country pursuits, chart positions and good manners really were more important than brassieres and feather boas.

Where did it all go wrong? Ferry with Roxette backing singers Jacqui Sullivan (left) and Doreen Chanter at the Montcalm Hotel, London, October 31, 1975

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

“It’s a very fast life I lead”

At the top of his game (“one does improve with every record”), BRYAN FERRY confronts his motivations, and the truth behind his image. “I had an inner conviction that I was going to be reasonably spectacular,” he tells CAROLINE COON. “Not that I have been yet. I’m just a minor celebrity.”

TAKEN FROM
MELODY MAKER
12/07/1975

IN 1971, when Bryan Ferry flew into the pop arena from nowhere, an unheard-of outsider with no musical pedigree to speak of, very few people thought he would survive longer than it would take his first album, *Roxy Music*, to sink without a trace. When the album, as stunning visually as it was musically, reached No 6 in the chart, the success was chalked up as a profitable hype.

But for four years now Ferry has been mesmerising us with his unique sound and audacious narcissism. To further confound the sceptics, he has had the steel nerve to launch out on a solo career and make a huge success out of that, too. And all the while he has remained a relatively enigmatic personality.

Ferry, the man rather than the musician, has been as elusive as mercury. Interviewers, trying to scratch beneath his frigid façade, have been treated to nothing more enlightening than monosyllabic grunts when anything other than his music was under scrutiny. He has a reputation for being detached, moody and very insecure. He gives interviews, with undisguised reluctance, only when promoting Roxy Music or Bryan Ferry makes it essential.

But since his new single "You Go To My Head", (one of the most sophisticated tracks he's ever produced), is just released, he was grudgingly prepared to reveal a little more of himself this week. He is safely ensconced in his new house, after a world tour and a brief sojourn in Mustique.

"Basically, I'm meant to be writing at the moment," he said, giving his notorious glazed stare into nowhere, his white shirt sleeves rolled up above his elbows, one grey flannel leg crossing another, and a tanned hand half-hiding his face.

"But I'm not working very hard," he continues despondently. "The fifth album is under way though. I think each album we've done has been reasonably different from the one before and this probably will have the same degree of distance — maybe a little more. I feel that *Country Life* was a very assured album, incredibly well-played and so on. And this album sounds incredibly good to me at the moment. Stronger at this stage than anything we've done before."

This must be very reassuring, because the pressure on Roxy Music to fulfill the promise of their potential is greater now than it ever was.

"Yes, the pressure does escalate," he says, still staring over his left shoulder. "Your own standards escalate, too. You're never going to please everybody, but I think one does improve with every record. You have to. Like any craftsman who makes anything, you get more experienced the more you do. Maybe you get to a stage of technical proficiency when you've made 100 albums, but we've nowhere near reached that yet."

"Sometimes I'm terribly confident about things"
BRYAN FERRY

Photo session for *Another Place, Another Time*, London, July 1, 1974

ANWAR HUSSEIN/GETTY IMAGES

His reference to craftsmanship was typical. He studied Fine Art at Newcastle University for four years before he came to London, and he brings to music his regard for the skill which he acquired as an academic painter. He gave up painting because he felt restricted by the traditional technical conventions of the profession.

"It always seemed strange to me to work in such a rarified atmosphere as the art world. Even if you're incredibly good, only a handful of people can ever appreciate it. Only a handful are really interested. Pop music has a much wider audience. Everybody has the original copy of a record. You can make as many as you want. Millions, hopefully. But with a painting, you just get one."

Looking back, did he regret not having the time to slowly build up his career, and a catalogue of songs, before he became such a huge success?

"Oh, no way, if the first album had gone without a trace, I would have been so brought down that I wouldn't have made the second one. That's what I think now, anyway. But I knew that once it was made, it would do well, that it would be of some interest. Sometimes I'm terribly confident about things."

He has come a long way since he left County Durham in 1968. Leaving his working-class background far behind, he has been on a self-confessed quest for refinement and finesse. That he should remove himself so far from his roots – there is hardly a trace of Northern accent when he speaks — is worth examining.

There are basically two breeds of rock'n'roll musicians. Some are working-class and have exploited their inarticulate but expressive origins to the full with an uncompromising punk-image and sound, like Family, Status Quo and Ian Hunter. And there are the educated middle-class musicians like the early Soft Machine, Pink Floyd, Yes and Mick Jagger who while using the medium of rock'n'roll, have always had the freedom to augment their music with references from their highly articulate heritage.

Ferry falls between the two. He is not middle-class, but he is educated. His music speaks to that sensitive raw nerve of insecurity in anyone who is trying to move out of one class, which is a betrayal, and into another, which is to risk being an outcast. A new generation of upwardly mobile, educated working-class fans can easily identify with his torments and aspirations.

He aspires to a cultural style which is the antithesis of Newcastle's bleak Victorian back streets. But so far his attempts at finesse and refinement have been as rustic as Rousseau's attempts to paint realistically were primitive. Which is not to say they have lacked charm. His conquering strength, through this attempted metamorphosis, has been his total lack of self-indulgence. He pares the fantasies and desires down to the bone. His despair, dragged across the stage, could so easily become cheap melodrama. But it never does. A fraction more hamming emphasis, and that wry smile would turn into the smirk of a thwarted werewolf.

The cover of *Another Time, Another Place* is the closest he's come to disaster. It misses the listless, aristocratic *Last Year At Marienbad* touch by a mile. 'José By The Pool Last Summer At Benidorm' is more like it. I had always found him most

convincing when he stood in front of the mic in a washed out T-shirt, his hands thrust deep into his jean pockets with the force of a lorry driver pushing a gear lever through a racing change.

That is, until this interview. Something about his new abode has helped his finesse no end. Perhaps it was a little difficult being refined in Earls Court. But he now seems utterly at home.

HIS new sitting room is graciously spacious, uncluttered and calm. The smooth walls are "drag-painted" in cream and pistachio green. The thick wall-to-wall carpeting absorbs the slightest sound in the house but, drifting through three huge bay windows, which overlook a garden where honeysuckle, roses and azaleas have been cultivated for years, float the sounds of birds singing and lawn mowers phutting. It's an idyllic setting, as far removed from his working-class roots as his present financial success will allow. He probably changes for dinner.

Why, though, had he opted out of, rather than cultivated, his working-class origins? "Oh, I've never denied them at all. I've always recognised that it's been one of my greatest strengths. I wouldn't be who I am now at all if I hadn't spent years playing billiards in really seedy pool halls with all the Teds. But over the years I've developed an appreciation of excellence in all the things and therefore I have fairly expensive tastes. I've always liked nice things."

What was he like as a child? "I think I was probably very spoiled. I was the only boy." He has two sisters, one older and the other younger than him. "I always got my own way. I like to think I was always bright. And I was very impressionable. Whenever I saw a movie I'd really live it, and if it was sad I'd cry. I had a very good normal background. I went to a State primary school, a State grammar school and a redbrick university, and that has a sort of charm about it for me. I know it sounds weird to say this, but I always knew I wouldn't be there for the rest of my life. I must have developed an inner drive at an early stage. I felt sort of blessed."

Was it easy to live with a dream like that when you were in your teens? "No, because although I had an inner conviction that I was going to be reasonably spectacular (not that I have been yet. I'm just a minor celebrity at the moment) at the time I was always very uncertain. But that can be a strength, I suppose. It makes you very restless, and it makes you try that much harder."

His parents were very poor. They never took holidays. His father was brought up on a farm, but during the depression, when agricultural workers fled to the city for work, he found a job looking after pit ponies in a mine outside Newcastle.

"I went through a period of resenting my parents because I wasn't born rich and I felt deprived and that my lot wasn't all that it should be. My parents are the nicest people you could possibly meet, but they're not the least bit intellectual. And I really resented that, too, at one time, though they always stressed the importance of education as the key to freedom. And when I wanted to become an artist it freaked them out a bit. They couldn't understand why anyone should have this strange inner need to express his inner feelings. They don't know what painting is about. They don't have any kind of reference from which to consider it. Happiness through material success is what they understand."

At times it sounds as though he is something of an intellectual snob – there's a brand new hardback copy of WH Auden's poems in the downstairs bathroom.

He likes to distance himself from those he terms "average Joes". Of Gary Glitter and Alvin Stardust he has said, "They are very simple people." He sees them trapped in the images they have created for themselves and he secretly loathes people who have stopped taking risks to achieve the impossible dream.

Bryan does not consider himself so simple. He is not afraid to make a superhuman effort to turn fantasy into reality. But then, he can't escape the awkward feeling that at best he can only become a perfect copy of the real thing. Ultimately, therefore, he faces disappointment and ever more wistful fantasies.

He surrounds himself with the trappings of refinement: glossy fashion magazines, the Daimler, dancing at Annabel's, and he has a pictures on the walls of those who have made it — legendary figures like Monroe, Elvis and Kay Kendall. And it hurts. He's something of a masochist, living on the knife-edge of an identity crisis. He strains himself to the limit, turning

Ferry takes a back seat, 1975

JOE STEVENS

his dilemma and struggle into great music.

People have called him insipid and cold, but the depth of his commitment to his ambition is almost religious, and his lyrics have the emotional intensity of white fire. And yet, in "The Thrill of It All" he says, *"All the pleasure that's surrounding you/Should compensate for all you're going through."* He seems to reap little emotional reward for his endeavours.

"Well, you have to forfeit certain things if you're indulging in the sort of work that I do. You don't have time for domestic comforts – like being happily married. A domestic life is something I don't seem to be able to get together at the moment. It's a very fast life I lead. There's so much work I set myself to do. You see I feel that I started very late and that I have to make up for lost time."

He has presented himself to his audience in a great many guises – the White Tux, the Gaucho, The Country Squire, Hitler's cousin, the sleazy '50s Mohair – but the costume parade is more than an astute promotion trick. He is aware that the pop audience's thirst for the novel is insatiable but, by giving them his various image to devour, he can maintain his essential creative identity undisturbed. The costumes become a mask behind which he can find some privacy to manoeuvre in relative peace.

"I needed the disguises much more when I first started than I do now. On *Top Of The Pops* last week I was wearing a suit I'd worn for days. Which was the coming-together of two worlds."

But isn't the dressing-up also an indication of how dissatisfied you really are with your own personality?

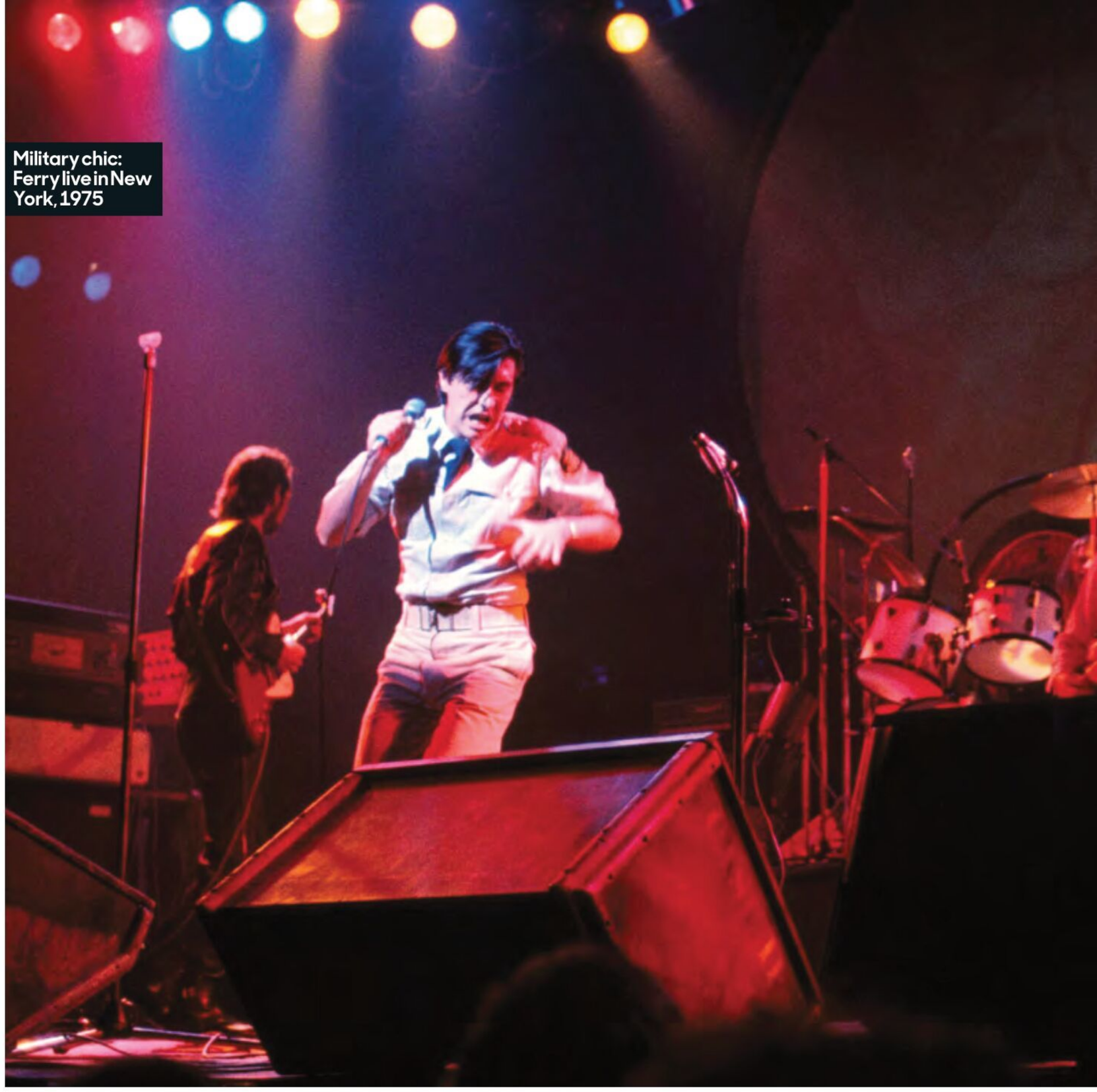
"I'm always dissatisfied with everything. On the other hand it would sound terribly conceited to say that I was quite happy as I am. I've never really wanted to be anyone else, even in my lowest moments. I've always wanted things to be better for me." A long pause, then he adds: "One of my heroes is Howard Hughes, I'd like to be a completely unknown figure like that, but it wouldn't work. I have to make myself available a bit."

When he reveals his private feelings on the Roxy Music albums, so wracked with doom are some of the songs that the stylus shudders in the groove. He is at his best when he sings about isolation, pain and disintegration. But his solo career has given him the opportunity to take refuge in other people's melodies.

"That's exactly right," he says. "Singing other people's songs takes a burden off me, and I learn an awful lot from doing them. It's like an author who, apart from writing books, will do in-depths, reviews of other peoples work. But I still throw myself into them. They have to be songs I really love. People don't often get a chance to hear those standards, and when they do, it's some terrible muzak version by a third-division MOR artist."

Ferry has been talking quietly in a pensive, soft voice. He chain smokes Senior Service and occasionally flicks hair out of his eyes. I had expected perhaps just glimmer of joy but there's really no avoiding the deep melancholia.

"I find it a very creative state of mind to be in, really," he says. I become very reflective and I think about things. I very rarely write a song when I'm up. There are a few... 'Do The Strand' was one."



Military chic: Ferry live in New York, 1975

RICHARDE.AARON/REDFERNS

Does he ever regret not having more self-confidence? "Sometimes I can be quite bright on occasions and full of high spirits. But I can get a certain amount of pleasure from my manic depression, too."

He has often said how self-destructive he is. Does he have to have to grapple with suicidal instincts?

"I have in the past, but not for a long time. Not when I have something specific to get done. I'm not obsessed with suicide by any means, but the idea does interest me. I'm slightly overawed by it."

Another trick "mask" Bryan uses is his ultimate "It's all so terribly boring." It's a conversation-stopper at the best of time, but it's the method Bryan uses to avoid admitting how very seriously he takes life. And if you substitute the word "pointless" for "boring" you are face to face with his self-doubts again.

"I do set myself defence traps like that," he says. "If I'm writing a song which is very heavy and too weighty, I think, 'Christ, if someone hears this they'll kill themselves.' So I try to throw in some witticism or a twist, just to relieve the tension. I like to interlace, not so much humour, but wit whenever possible because it can all seem as though it's getting too heavy. There's something very English about that. There's a certain dry humour that comes out of all that blackness which is very important to me.

"I suppose I play around somewhere between pessimism and optimism. Cyril Connolly said an amazing thing about Scott Fitzgerald's work once – 'His message is despair.' I think that's terrific. Fitzgerald's one of my favourite writers. All his content, his message, is sad and moving, but the style by which it's conveyed has a lightness, a charm and a delicacy about it. And I've always tried, I suppose, to do that myself."

It wasn't always so easy for him to be sensitive. As an adolescent in Newcastle he was surrounded by men to whom physical strength was a god and introspective cerebral activity was a domain reserved for cissies.

"I didn't have too much trouble, though, because I didn't have any close friends when I was young and I lost contact with my contemporaries as soon as I left school."

> **"I can get a certain pleasure from my depression"**
>
> BRYAN FERRY

Nevertheless, Brian has never hidden the fact that the set he moves in is very gay. Was he drawn to that environment because he had difficulties with his masculinity?

"My virility...?" and he laughs. "No... well, er, it's difficult to talk about people in groups, but I like people who are very creative and very clever and the majority of the people I know like that are gay."

There are a great many clever creative men who aren't gay. "Well, I never seem to bump into them. But I'm far from gay myself. I like women – on occasions."

But the women he has, on his album covers anyway, are as close to being men in drag as it's possible to get.

"Yes, that has been said about every album cover. They do usually have a very hard, austere look – which I must like. There's something removed from reality about the girls on the covers, which I also like."

Elsewhere he has said, "I can live with men... but not women. Everything becomes involved and too complicated when you're sleeping with someone. It seems to exclude any possibility of friendship."

"That's getting very close to the bone," he tells me. "But it's not strictly true. Generally though, I tend to know two types of women. The platonic friends who I get on with in a different way to the other sort I date."

The aloof distance which Bryan likes to keep between himself and relationships is most evident when he wears his Kommandant costume. Control is a key word in his psyche. It's as if relationships with other people muddy the pool of his composure, and he can only keep a grip on his own emotions while he has control over other people's. One of the ways you can control women, or anyone for that matter, is to buy them with hard cash. In the song "If It Takes All Night", Bryan refers to his ability to afford girls from Madam Claude's establishment in Paris.

"Yes, if you buy a woman you can control her without any commitment. Prostitution has always seemed quite a sensible thing to me, really. Not that I'm suggesting that unsuspecting ladies should make a bee-line for Soho and a latter day Stephen Ward. Actually, I'd quite like to be Stephen Ward. There's something to be said for the courtesan. But you seem to be straying away from the Top 20 at this point."

Not so. The way he relates to men and women is at the heart of his writing. From his lyrics he comes across as an isolated loner, a man afraid to commit himself to anything. Of his homosexual friends he has said, "If I disappeared tomorrow, most of them wouldn't notice the difference." He feels he can slip in and out of sex scenes, unnoticed and untouched, as easily as he slips in and out of disguise.

"That's an overall truth about me. I *am* afraid to commit myself. I always tend to be the man on the outside for some reason. That's why I tend to see a little of a lot of people rather than a lot of a few. I'm always careful not to see too much of someone in case I get bored with them – or they get bored with me. It's a selfish thing and I'm a very selfish person. I love to like people. And I'm also very critical of people, as well. If I get to know them well, it spoils it."

Has he ever had a deep relationship with anyone? "Yes, I lived with a girl for three years and that was quite a traumatic affair. But it didn't work out in the end and I decided that I'd be better off living alone."

In "Bitter-Sweet" he says: *"I've opened up my heart so many times/But now it's closed."* "Yes, closed for lunch," he says. "I tend to squirm when people bring out exhibit A or B from the lyrics. I don't like adding to them. If I didn't think that line spoke for itself, I'd have written footnotes."

Is he a very giving person? "At the moment, yes. I'm going through a very generous time. But I don't give much of myself, I suppose. Perhaps I'm not very affectionate."

Has anything happened in the last few days to make him happy? "Yes, the sales figures on the single." Another pause. "Nothing else very much. I'm at a very low period, actually. It's the summer recess and I'm supposed to be working hard and it gets on top of me sometimes. But then, in a couple of flashes, a couple of times a week, I have my best times. The rest is spent pacing around in circles."

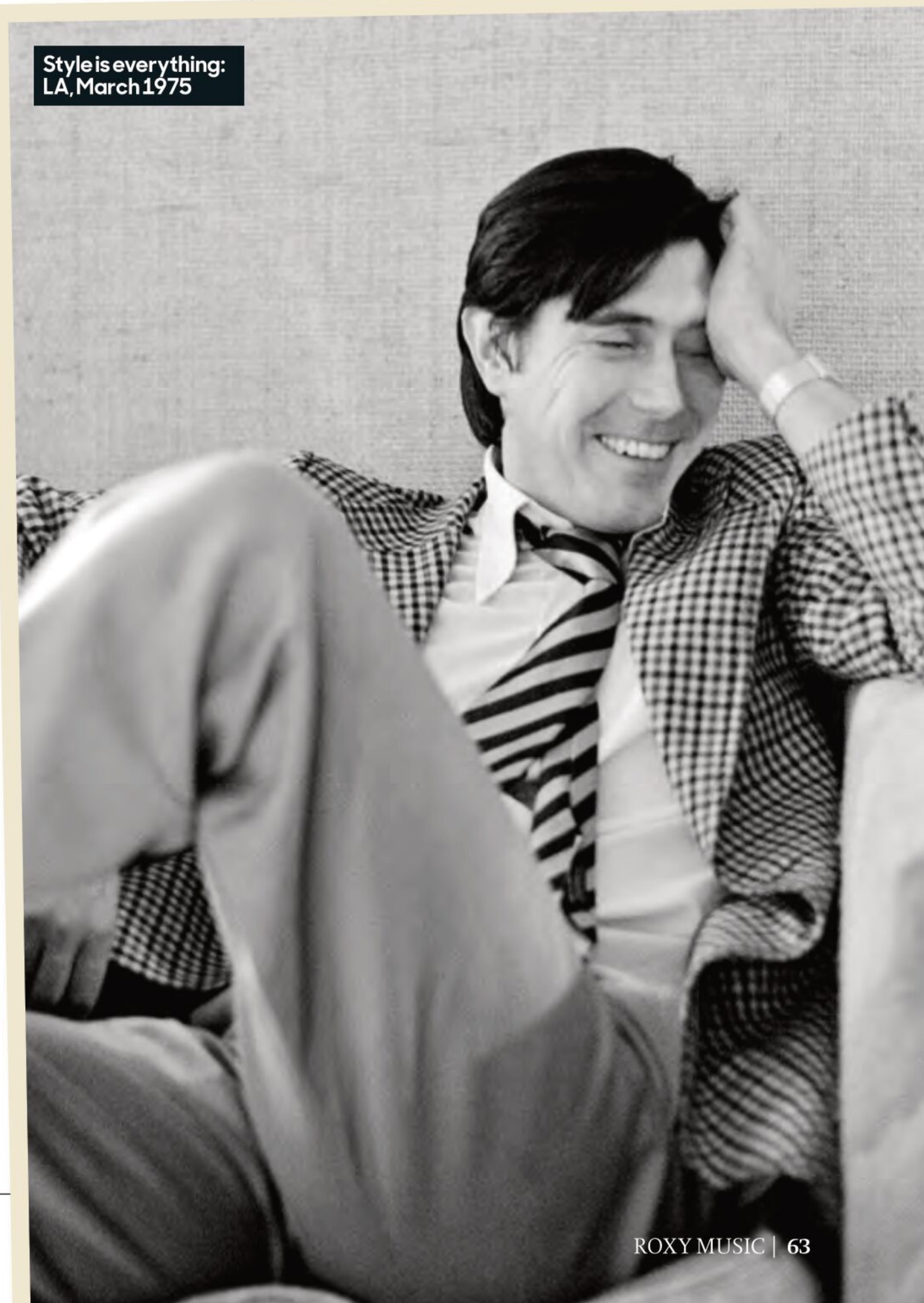
Nothing could be more indicative of his insecurity than his belief in the axiom *"Le style, c'est l'homme"*. He is not yet ready to admit that "man begets style". He still needs a constant barrage of media feedback in order to find his own style in other people's readymade images. And since his heroes are images, which stare out at him, emotionless and inanimate — he sets himself impossible standards. Were his heroes flesh and blood, perhaps he would allow himself some human failings.

As it is, he tortures himself with what he considers to be his imperfections. What is remarkable is the way he exploits his personal strife rather than letting it destroy him.

When does he feel most at ease? "When I'm working on a new song. And sometimes, strangely enough, when I'm onstage. That's when everything seems to work at the same time."

AND what about the spectre of the future? "Well, just at the moment it's forming a sort of logical pattern of making more and more records. And that's a pattern I'd quite like to break... I hate any kind of a rut. I don't like performing night after night. Sometimes you have to force yourself to go through the emotions. If you are a singer you have to live every song. And a lot of the songs I've written, unfortunately, are very tragic. To throw myself into all those songs night after night really takes it out of me. I'm a wreck at the end of a tour."

And the painting? "No, it doesn't hold much interest for me any more. Except as some camp idea of myself at 65 in a deck chair painting some water colours of the Côte d'Azur."



Style is everything: LA, March 1975

SUZAN CARSON/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

THE SOLO ALBUMS

ENO

1970s

{AMBIENT}

RELEASED: 1975–1978

From violence springs serenity – Eno's imaginary film soundtracks and airport relaxation tapes set the background haze of generations. **BY JON DALE**

AMBIENT music, so the story goes, was born of accident. It was January 1975, and the young Brian Eno, having released two acclaimed solo albums, while also setting himself up as the premiere synth noodler and arch conceptualist of British art rock, had just finished working on "Miss Shapiro", a song for Phil Manzanera's 1975 solo album, *Diamond Head*. As some tell it, Eno had been thinking, "If that song were the last thing I ever record, would I mind having that as my final piece of work?" – he slipped, fell onto the road and was hit by a black cab.

His head cracked open, his legs bruised, and his back strained, Eno spent time in A&E at St Mary's Hospital, London, before checking himself out, recovering at his Grantully Road home. At one point, his friend Julie Nylon dropped by with an album of 18th-century harp music. With one channel of the stereo not working, the volume set unusually low, and typically inclement London weather outside, the music all but disappeared into the environment. Eno had, almost by chance, stumbled upon a variation of Erik Satie's *musique d'ameublement* (furniture music), where music became a tint, a passing scent, in the air.

It'd be just like Eno to source one of his most significant artistic developments from a near-calamity. This 'discovery' of ambient music, though – or, at the very least, its reordering of traditional musical hierarchies – would inform much of what Eno would do over the coming decades. You can hear it on his next, loosely song-based album, *Another Green World*, where song forms being to liquify. Hints of it could be found earlier, in embryonic form, in his collaborations with Robert Fripp. Indeed, Eno's first ambient album, 1975's *Discreet Music*, found its genesis in preparation for an Eno/Fripp performance. Listening back to a pre-recorded backing tape, Eno accidentally played it at half-speed, and loved the slow-motion sonority that seeped from the speakers.

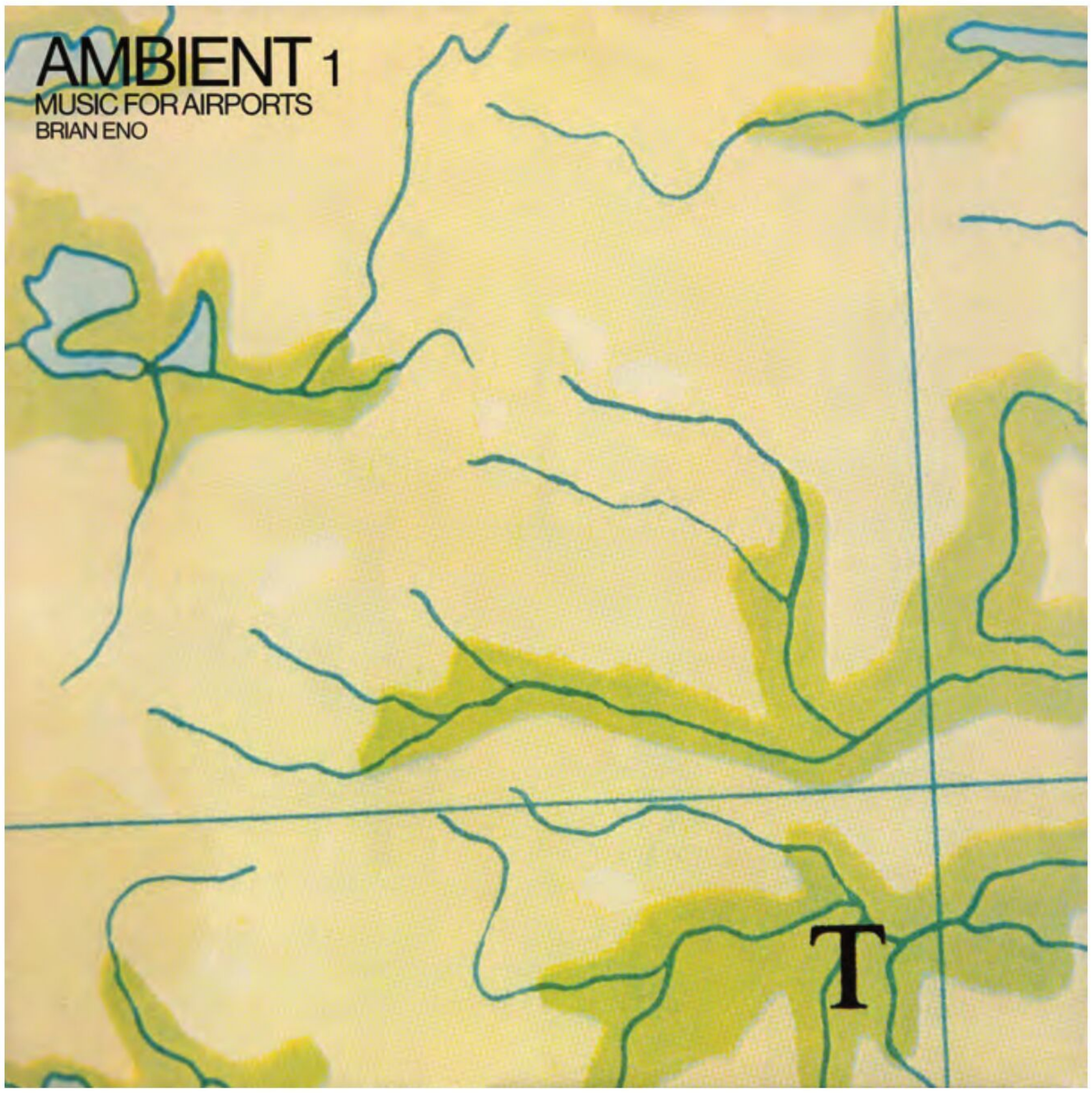
Discreet Music's centrepiece is this very recording, which stretches over the entire first side of the album, its half-hour easily the most becalmed, stilled music Eno had yet released. Its beauty lies in its simplicity; a number of simple phrases weave in and out of each other, caught in each other's trails of delay, half-heard glimpses of melody flickering just within earshot. Its structure comes, in many ways, from the intricate tape-delay system that Eno had been playing with for some time, which he diagrammed out on the back cover of the album; in its liner notes, he states that he's always "gravitated towards situations and systems that, once set into operation, could create music with little or no intervention". Here we have the genesis, also, of Eno's 'generative music'.

Flip the record over and you have three variations on the Pachelbel *Canon* – interesting programmatic adventures that, somehow, don't really cohere. Eno would later claim it unsuccessful, but ever the pragmatist, he also found a more direct, perhaps even financially rewarding, use for the limpid pools of texture and tone he was exploring.

CRITICS' VERDICTS

MUSIC FOR FILMS
"Anonymous, pretty, brief, evocative – much more so than Bowie's plastic-tablecloth kitchen tone poems."
Ian Penman, NME, 14/10/1978

MUSIC FOR AIRPORTS
"Ignorable *Airports* certainly is, but there's no way it can be considered even *slightly* interesting on any level other than the purely conceptual."
Andy Gill, NME, 24/3/1979



IN 1976, an Eno promo record of 500 copies was circulated to directors and other players in the cinematic/televisual field. He called the collection *Music For Films*, but this first edition varies quite significantly from the version that was released to the public two years later: this one including excerpts from *Another Green World* and the Fripp/Eno collaboration. By the time of its full release, and following the *Discreet Music* model, Eno would mutate backing tracks from his song-based albums into mood pieces. The album set simple, emotionally resonant chord progressions in amber and aspic (see the dark, brooding trilogy of "Sparrowfall"), and let simple melodic machinations play out as artful experiments in brevity.

Eno saw them, in some ways, as "soundtracks to imaginary films", but some of them were taken up for broadcast and have slowly inveigled their way into the collective consciousness, much like "Another Green World" did as the theme tune to BBC's arts programme *Arena*. He also had other ideas: "My secret hope was that people would listen to it and say, 'Hey, this is a nice record', which is what happened."

1978 was a banner year for Eno ambience. Alongside *Films*, it also saw the release of *Ambient 1: Music For Airports* – perhaps his most significant album from the '70s, articulating, as it did, what this once-imagined, now-realised genre could, and should, be.

ENO WOULD GUIDE PLAYERS GENERALLY, BUT LEAVE THE RESULTS OPEN TO CHANCE

Music For Airports offers a music of rare delicacy, of gentle quiescence. Its four long pieces, sketched out via visual scores on the back sleeve, are carved from improvisations, one featuring Robert Wyatt on piano. Eno would guide players generally, but leave the results open to chance, or would lock onto specific moments from improvisations, loop them, and gently colour them with his own, muted interjections.

It was a concept born of Eno's anxiety about flying – surely the rush and clamour of the airport departure lounge just intensified everyone's stress levels; what if the music was a sonic tincture? But it also managed to blow open the doors, albeit very unassumingly, for what an undemonstrative, yet endlessly rapturous, 'background' music could sound like.

And for a process-based music built from intellectual enterprise – Eno said that the album "came out of that Borgesian idea that you could invent a world in reverse, by inventing the artefacts that ought to be in it first" – the end result was intensely affecting. Years later, performances of *Music For Airports* by Bang On A Can moved audiences to tears; Eno seemed genuinely surprised that "everybody had the same response to this music, which was originally conceived as deliberately austere and unemotional". Such was the power of ambient music, in its first blush – the process unlocked the gates of the heart.

TRACKMARKS

DISCREET MUSIC ★★★★
Label: Obscure
Released: November 1975
Produced by: Brian Eno
Recorded at: Brian Eno's studio; Trident, London
Personnel: Brian Eno (synthesiser, keyboards), Gavin Bryars (arranger, conductor on "Three Variations..."), The Cockpit Ensemble (performers on "Three Variations...")
Highest chart position: UK –; US –

MUSIC FOR AIRPORTS ★★★★★
Label: EG
Released: March 1978
Produced by: Brian Eno
Recorded at: London; Conny's Studio, Cologne
Personnel: Brian Eno (synthesiser, electric piano, vocals), Christa Fast (vocals), Christine Gomez (vocals), Inge Zeininger (vocals), Robert Wyatt (acoustic piano)
Highest chart position: UK –; US –

MUSIC FOR FILMS ★★★★
Label: EG
Released: October 1978
Produced by: Brian Eno
Recorded at: Various locations
Personnel: Brian Eno (synthesiser, found sounds), Rhett Davies (trumpet), John Cale (viola), Phil Collins (percussion), Robert Fripp (electric guitar), Fred Frith (electric guitar), Percy Jones (bass guitar), Bill MacCormick (bass guitar), Dave Mattacks (percussion), Paul Rudolph (guitar), Rod Melvin (electric piano)
Highest chart position: UK 55; US –

SIREN

RELEASED: 31 OCTOBER 1975

You are cordially invited to the premiere of the New Smooth. Black tie required, drug of choice: love.

BY GRAEME THOMSON

THERE is a case to be made for nominating *Siren* as the first true-born album of the '1980s'. On Roxy Music's fifth record you hear stirring pre-echoes of Bowie's *Scary Monsters*, of U2's incipient pre-stadia rock chime, of post-punk pop-funk, of the glistening synthetic surfaces of the New Romantic movement.

If Roxy were the very essence of retro-futurism when they began, embodying the glorious confusion wrought by the possibilities of the space age colliding with the solidly nostalgic sensibilities of the 1950s, by 1975 their febrile alchemy had settled somewhat. On *Siren* the sound pushes forward with a relatively solid sense of purpose, rather than shuttling back and forth with mad abandon. The band are cruising into the great beyond with a streamlined purr, well past the halfway point on the road between "Virginia Plain" and *Avalon*.

The new smoothness evident on parts of *Country Life* has now become the guiding principle. Aside from the rollicking "Whirlwind", on *Siren* the jagged attack of glam rock has all but ceased to be an active ingredient. Bryan Ferry had always been partial to a tuxedo; now the music is dressed to complement. Having shucked off many of the sartorial and lyrical eccentricities of the past, a more crafted, classical sensibility comes into play. And while the antic spirit of old remains, it's filtered through pop, disco, funk, soul and rock with an uncluttered lushness that would define them ever after. Depending on your preferences, *Siren* is either the masterful crystallisation of their entire aesthetic, or the moment when things begin to get just a little less interesting.

There's no denying its cohesion. *Siren* is nothing so grand as a concept album, but it gels, thematically as well as sonically. For this ride, Ferry takes on the role of lovestruck lothario – the missing link between Sinatra's impeccably turned out broken-hearted nighthawk and Paul Buchanan's eager student of neon loneliness. Perhaps it's coming from the heart. Perhaps it's all a pose. It doesn't much matter. Either way, he wears it well.

The songs present the push and pull of love, in its many forms, as an addiction, from first hit to final comedown. "Love Is The Drug" kicks it off with a table-clearing flourish. Set to a wonderfully lock-stepped reggae-funk rhythm, it is less about love than desire, the ritualised nightly hunt portrayed as a desperate military manoeuvre with its own set of rules and instructions: "*Face to face, toe to toe/Heart to heart as we hit the floor.*" The power of the song resides in its jittery evocation of pent-up craving, the music straining like a big dog on a short leash. Release comes via brief bursts of horns, but this is all about the wanting, not the getting. "Love Is The Drug" became Roxy Music's biggest hit to date, reaching No 2 in the UK and 30 in the US, where it remains their sole Top 40 hit.

At other times on *Siren*, the music is presented more plainly, and Ferry sounds almost sincere. "End Of The Line" is simply beautiful, a rolling country-rock ballad with a gorgeously languid fiddle solo. Ferry provides a tender vocal and lyric to

CRITICS' VERDICTS

"There's a crispness and vitality in Chris Thomas's production which is reminiscent of the sense of adventure and cavalier spirit which marked their early recordings." Allan Jones, MM, 5/10/1975

"The Baron has allowed himself to drift into an aesthetic cul-de-sac. And that goes for the sartorial, musical and 'ambience' stakes alike." Neil Spencer, NME, 25/10/1975

TRACKMARKS

1. Love Is The Drug ★★★★★
2. End Of The Line ★★★★
3. Sentimental Fool ★★★★
4. Whirlwind ★★★
5. She Sells ★★★★
6. Could It Happen To Me? ★★★
7. Both Ends Burning ★★★★★
8. Nightingale ★★★
9. Just Another High ★★★★

Label: Island
Recorded at: Air Studios, London
Produced by: Chris Thomas
Personnel: Bryan Ferry (vocals, keyboards, harmonica), John Gustafson (bass), Eddie Jobson (violin, synthesisers, keyboards), Andy Mackay (oboe, saxophone), Phil Manzanera (guitar), Paul Thompson (drums)
Highest chart position: UK 4; US 50

match, as he walks disconsolately in the rain, every inch the silver screen romantic hero who this time didn't get the girl.

On "Sentimental Fool", his anguished falsetto sounds genuinely heartsore. "*Surely you cannot be leading me on... Well if that's so, however can I love again?*"

"Could It Happen To Me?" foregrounds Ferry as crooner/composer, offering a wide-eyed and guileless take on affairs of the heart. "*I would love to fall in love,*" he gushes. "*Could it happen to me?*"

This is the conflicted sound of Ferry coming up on the love drug. By the time we get to "Both Ends Burning", he has peaked, and the rush is intense. "*I can't control the fires burning in my soul tonight,*" he sings, hot and high. The song is a glittering juggernaut, pulsing future-music, with a stunning guitar solo from Manzanera.

THE inevitable crash arrives on "Just Another High", the album's finale and a neat bookend to "Love Is The Drug". Musically, it's one of *Siren*'s most elegantly ambitious tracks, from its eerie electronic piano notes to the long, beautifully abrasive climax, with its premonitions of The Psychedelic Furs' "Pretty In Pink" and Bowie's "Heroes". The carnal hit of last night's shadow-play has worn off; now Ferry is wrestling with something more stark in the morning light, pulling up the blinds and allowing a sharp blast of reality to fill the room. "*Marriages made in heaven, can they survive in this life?/Surely it came as no surprise, love was too hot to handle... I'm just another crazy guy/Playing at love was another high.*" Looks like he was just messing all along.

"Just Another High" doesn't just end *Siren*; it resolves it. The album is intensely satisfying. If there is a caveat, it's that – now we're here – the unmapped future seems just a little less wild and thrilling than previously advertised.

Some critics asked, Where is the Art? – a grumble that still surfaces periodically – but it's there, all right. You'll find it in the occult guitar, plink-plonk atmospherics and wandering oboe of the first two minutes of "Sentimental Fool", a song that harks back to the magnificent strangeness of *For Your Pleasure*. It's there, too, in "She Sells", a delightful tumble of a track, which begins like the Doobie Brothers fronted by David Niven, then takes a series of lurching handbrake turns into furious urban funk and robotic art rock; and in Andy Mackay's ululating sax solo on "Nightingale", which otherwise is one of *Siren*'s less arresting songs, despite its prettily folksy intro and Paul Thompson's driving drums.

Most obviously, it's there in Graham Hughes' striking cover image. Ferry's soon-to-be girlfriend, Jerry Hall, is presented as a dangerously alluring vision in aquamarine – love very literally on the rocks. "The cover of the new Roxy Music album is credited to eight people, two more than made the music," noted *Rolling Stone*, somewhat archly, in their review. There was something reassuring about that. Roxy were changing, but they were doing so with their sense of style intact.

THE JAGGED ATTACK OF GLAM ROCK HAS ALL BUT CEASED TO BE AN ACTIVE INGREDIENT

ARCHIVE 1975

"A slightly left-of-centre rock group"

Rumours abound of tensions within the Roxy camp. Has an "Eno situation" arisen? Has Siren wandered too far toward professionalism? PHIL MANZANERA and ANDY MACKAY talk it over. "Roxy's good," they decide. Elsewhere, Eno embraces the random on Another Green World: "Uncertainty is the quality I want."

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

"This year's been the best of them all": Roxy Music, Sept 26, 1975 – (l–r) Phil Manzanera, John Gustafson, Paul Thompson, Andy Mackay, Eddie Jobson and Bryan Ferry

TAKEN FROM
NME
29/11/1975

THE head waiter interrupts Phil Manzanera's conversational foreplay. His Franco-Italian, Earl's Court accent pedantically recommends the unlisted "fresh river trout and fresh salmon". We both order the salmon.

Phil Manzanera is only in London for the afternoon. The band's newly ordained guitar hero is down from the Shropshire border country where he'd been hiding out prior to Roxy's latest attempt to break the US market.

Last spring, on the third tour, the band headlined their way around the country and *Country Life* charted in what appeared to be a direct relationship to the number of US citizens who visited Roxy gigs.

It went to No 35 in the US album charts, to be precise. Sixty places up on *Stranded*.

All this confounded those like myself who believed that the Roxy tradition was too firmly stuck in a European school of rock music and also that its quasi-gayness was too sexually threatening for all those sociologically retarded inhabitants of the American continent to be able to handle.

Siren had its US release a couple of weeks back, and even without a tour, in the week of release it should probably score very nicely in America. It's a solid rock album, and therefore – it is voiced – the Great Roxy Copout. From the esoteric brilliance of the early albums to the immaculate straight – but perhaps lesser – hard rock of *Siren*...?

"Exactly. That's the way I see it. A straight rock album. Roxy becoming... what's the word now?" – Manzanera beams – "A rock group. I feel much more than ever before that I'm in a rock group...But still a left-of-centre rock group. Just slightly left-of-centre. Which is the way I see a lot of the rock groups like The Who and Zeppelin. And all the groups that have carried on like the Floyd...they're all slightly left or right of some centre.

"I think it's also like an instinct thing. It's not conscious, but it's just an instinct for survival. It's something that happens to all groups. We do head for this sort of centre point, because that's how we're going to survive.

"And you can do anything that's relevant to that, which I think I've sort of done with the solo projects."

However, whither went the early sound's wit? Here only the intro to "Sentimental Fool" shows any true originality that harks back to that of the first two albums. Is this, though, just a realisation of what the States is more likely to accept?

"Oh, I don't know. It's something which we haven't ever talked about in the group. We never say, 'We're gonna make this one really commercial,' or anything like that. We've just done what we felt like doing.

"But I suspect... My theory is that there's some unconscious instinct of trying to survive commercially.

"And also...," Manzanera appears to gaze at his innermost musical soul, "in the beginning someone described us as inspired amateurs...which is something we're well aware of, and so we're always striving to become professionals. A lot of things people saw as camp or whatever were all in earnest. A lot of things on the first and second albums were like [*laughs*] us trying to sort of strive for professionalism, because we felt sort of deficient in that way.

"You can't remain an inspired amateur all the time. You just have to progress."

THIS is an opportune moment for Andy Mackay to be seen passing the window behind Manzanera, headed for the front door of the restaurant. He enters stealthily.

The wind player hands Manzanera a five pound note. The latter had correctly predicted that "Love Is The Drug" was a Top Five single. Mackay, who co-wrote the number, does not seem too disobliged at having lost his bet.

Change of tack: "Having lost a fiver, I'm giving a tenner each way on him [*pointing at Manzanera*] staying for three months or more."

Ah. Now this is most certainly one of the reasons for the Manzanera and Mackay co-presence: The Rumours.

Mackay: "Which rumours are these?"

Salewicz: The one that the rock world's buzzing with. That you're both going to leave Roxy Music.

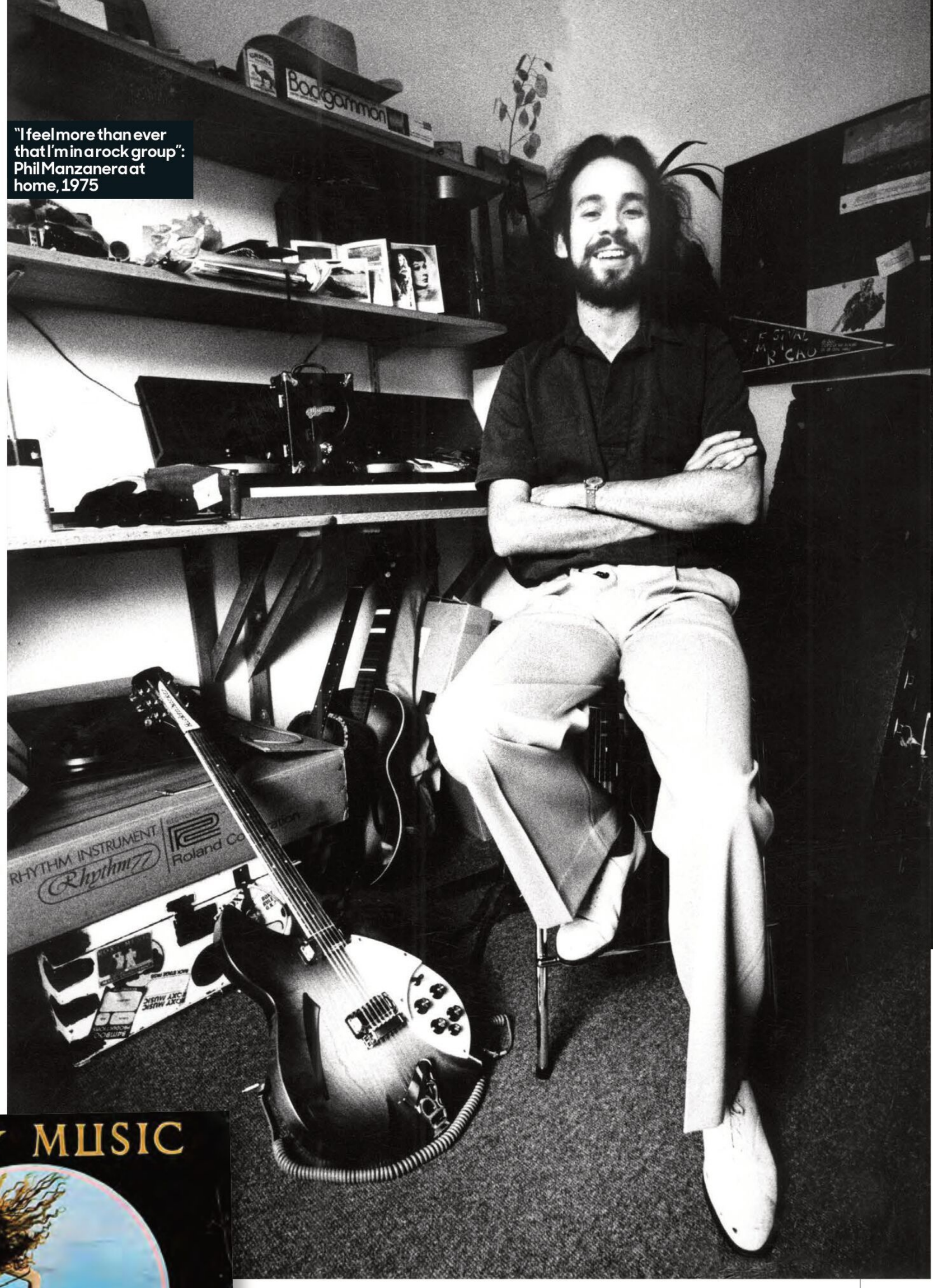
Mackay: "The best thing is to bet on this. There's an amazing amount of money to be made and lost."

Manzanera: "I'll have five to four on Andy Mackay to leave Roxy."

Mackay: "You can go for the Yankee – five bets – that all of Roxy will leave Roxy."

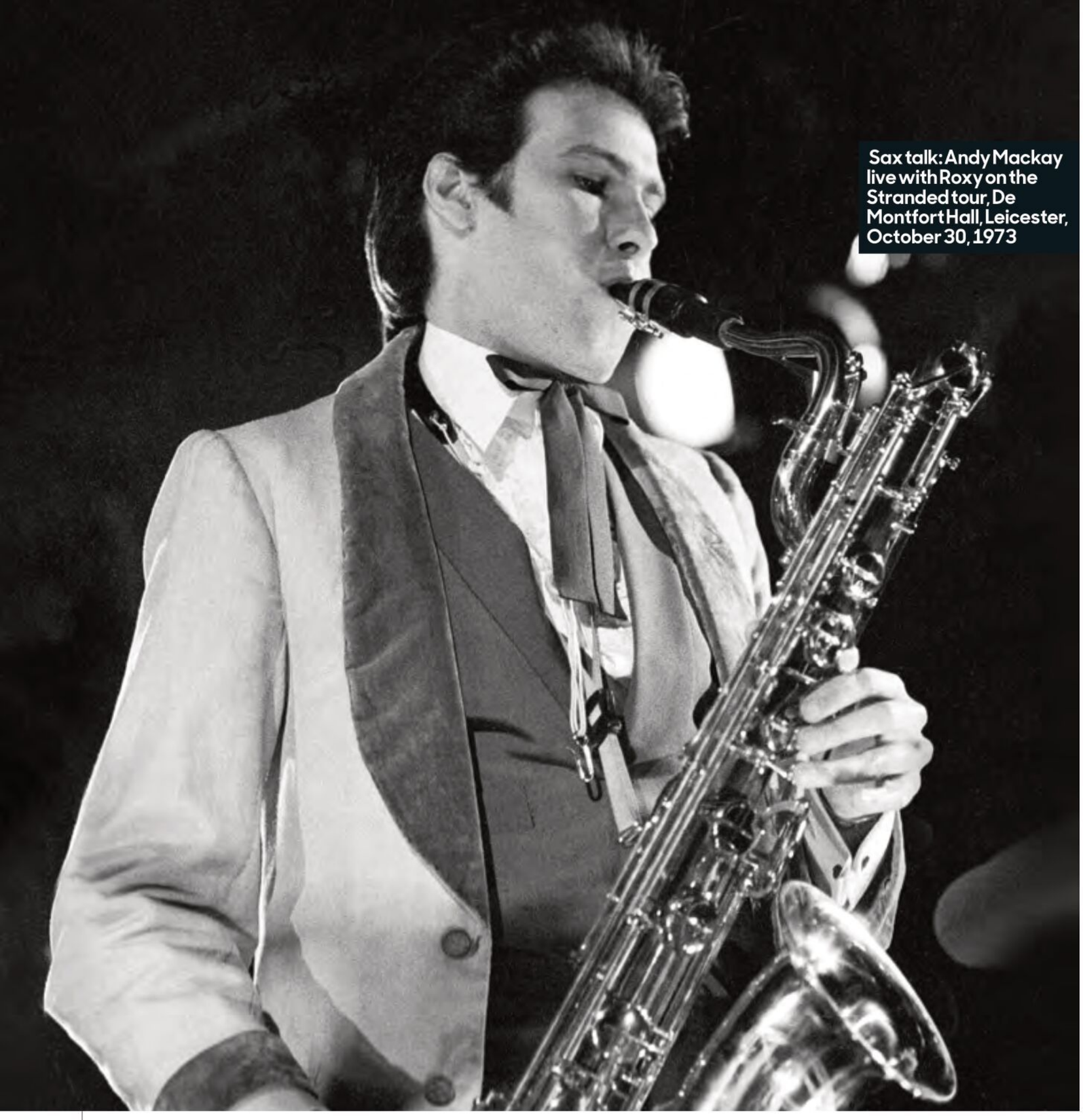
"Or we can tell the truth. Eddie Jobson is really 30. I'm really 18. All the guitars on Roxy records are in fact played by..."

Waiter: "Sole meuniere. Please?"



"I feel more than ever that I'm in a rock group": Phil Manzanera at home, 1975

GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/REDFERNS



Sax talk: Andy Mackay live with Roxy on the Stranded tour, De Montfort Hall, Leicester, October 30, 1973

Manzanera: "I thing all the rumours I've seen have been in the back of *NME*."

Salewicz: The rumours go like this: You, Phil, are tired of the autocracy within the band. The success of your solo album and relative critical acclaim will lead you to split from the fold, taking with you an equally dispirited Andy. Eddie can't afford to leave but otherwise would do. And Paul won't be leaving because he's dedicated to Bryan.

Mackay: "Can we rewrite it?"

Manzanera: "Phil is dedicated to Bryan and Bryan can't afford to leave. Eddie is a wealthy young millionaire who's going to take over the management. Bryan's signing a life-long contract with Baileys."

Mackay: [*a little huffishly*] "Does it not occur to the press that there have always been split rumours? The time to worry is when there aren't any."

Manzanera: "My theory is that there's somebody who thinks I should leave, and if he keeps putting it in *NME* long enough he'll convince me. I think that's absolutely true, actually. It can only be Tony Tyler – nobody else."

Is Bryan a little brought down about being upstaged by you? A lot of people think your solo spots on the British tour acted as a catalyst for the set – and that another Eno situation is developing.

Manzanera becomes considerably more serious: "Well, I just want to refute it. I mean – honestly. I can't speak for Bryan, but I wouldn't have thought he'd be worried – he's always done so incredibly well and sold so many records. I certainly haven't done anywhere near as well commercially as he has. I don't see any reason why... unless it's because I've got my Ritchie Blackmore solo spot to do."

He takes a long, thoughtful slug of Perrier water: "Roxy's really good. I think it's fantastic at the moment. This year's been the best of them all..."

An exasperated burst from Mackay: "The irony is that these rumours come at a time when the band is stronger and more cheerful than it's been for, like, three years.

"This whole tour – Wembley – was for us just the best..."

"We do head for this centre point. That's how we survive"

PHIL MANZANERA

"The second night at Wembley," adds Manzanera. "You know, I was really proud to be playing there with Roxy. Everything went down so well. We went down at all the gigs so well..."

I did notice that at the Wembley gig Roxy Music were playing more as a band than at any time that I've seen them. Bryan appeared more integrated into the band.

"Everybody seems to think this, but really I can't see any difference. It always has been integrated. It's just that people pick up on different things at different periods. I'm sure that's what it is. And that people don't want to pick up on that thing about Bryan this year. That's the reason they've picked up on something else."

Mackay comments through a mouthful of spaghetti carbonara: "Obviously Bryan did a lot more interviews and people tended to hear what Bryan had to say about us. But I mean as far as the band goes, it's always been much the same."

So you were totally happy when you came across in Bryan's interviews almost as his sidemen? "Yeah." Mackay's face turns sour. "I got pissed off when history was, like, rewritten unnecessarily about the origins of the band and so on. Obviously in showbusiness people get pissed off if they feel they're not being given credit, you know."

It may be that people don't understand how you work in the studio. One still has the impression of Bryan being very autocratic. That you are almost the Bryan Ferry Group.

"Yeah. Well, that's because we don't let people in the studio."

"And it's partly because Bryan has done an incredible number of interviews in which he's been able to say things unchallenged, you know.

"It hasn't happened for quite a long time, but there was a period when Bryan said things that are best... Bryan was indiscreet, you know. He had his own reasons. It was something which came out of particular situations.

"But it seems that situation has passed now. I don't think it'll happen again, personally."

Yeah, but if you do believe that the press misconstrue what goes down in Roxy, then surely the early heavy structuring of the 1972 Roxy campaign on the nation's consciousness is largely to blame.

"There was a time," concedes Andy Mackay, "when Bryan gave the media quite a lot to work on. I don't think he does now."

NOW THAT Mackay's here, let's have another question about the wit or self-consciousness or whatever of the quasi-art-school ambience of the first two Roxy Music albums. How conscious were you of that when they were made? Were you aware then of the image of effete intellectuals that surrounded the band and the music?

It's Manzanera who picks up the question: "Well, I mean when I came into contact with the people – Andy, Bryan and Eno, you know – the thing was already in a fairly established stage, you know. But that was the impression that I got too. And I liked that.

"I think everybody thought it would appeal to college students and people like that maybe more than to your average punter.

"But thank goodness for 'Virginia Plain'. That opened up the whole thing to a lot more people, you know... I hate to just appeal to a sort of intellectual element or whatever."

However, the 'weird and different' aspects of the sound, and the self-conscious early image, do not gel well with the non-Roxy aficionado. In fact, the rock music fan who doesn't get off on Roxy is generally very, very suspicious of the band.

Sheer hatred is frequently the reaction...

"Mmmmm. Yeah," nods Manzanera.

...And quite vehemently despising you all as people.

"I think," muses Andy, "this is a kind of irreconcilable clash between fans who like a band as a kind of way of life and those who simply like listening to their music."

IANDICKSON/REDFERNS

"Also," Manzanera points out to Mackay, "it's because the early interviews, which were mainly with Bryan and Brian Eno and, well, even you – who don't particularly like groups like the Zeppelins and so on.

"If they'd interviewed Paul [*Thompson*], for example, we'd have come over as really loving Led Zeppelin and... I like them and a lot of groups like Little Feat and people like that.

"That's one of our problems in America, you know. Whenever we're summarised it's always something crass like, 'The band who wear suits and ties offstage'," Mackay laughs. "There are members of this band who've never been seen in suits and ties."

There've been criticisms that Bryan can't sing, that none of you can play your instruments... I think there's a lot of resentment because you happened so rapidly.

Mackay, somewhat wearily: "I think we stated loudly and often in our early days that we had paid our dues.

"I'd been playing instruments for, I think, 15 years before Roxy started, you know? I mean, Paul paid his dues in the most conventional fashion. He'd played in clubs and gone on the road with gigging bands – the whole thing. It's really just a perverse refusal of the public to accept the truth."

"I think," adds Phil, "That when we play live we convert a lot more people than when we play on record."

Mackay again: "Even so, the dilettante view of Roxy still comes across. It's going, though.

"Sooner or later, I feel, there is a kind of natural justice in the rock business. And when the final history of Roxy is written in [*laughs*] five years' time, quite a different view will come. It'll largely be affected by what we're doing at that time. I can see that the whole concept of who really makes things tick could change.

"For instance, for two years Paul was totally underestimated. And his contribution to the band actually is... not just as a good drummer but in actually being an integral part of the way all Roxy songs take shape."

"That first album could have been much better..."
PHIL MANZANERA

OF COURSE, the early King's Road ligger image was capable of coming across as rather tweely middle class.

Mackay: "I suppose so. That's the trouble with free education. You get all these working-class boys educated beyond their station.

"Three of the band – Bryan, Paul and myself – are solidly... I don't know how one would describe it... Kind of thinking working class... How stupid."

Yet, of course, these are all contributory factors to Roxy's never having been accepted within the Rock Mainstream. The band has always seemed like an aristocratic child removed from it all. Although maybe with *Siren* you'll become part of the British rock hardcore.

"That's a change," admits Mackay, "Yeah. It's also changed because we've extended our immediate circle of contacts and friends so that we're now pretty much involved with the mainstream of British rock music. Fans tend to be a bit slower to pick up on these things.

"But again, I think basically you get your satisfaction from what you actually do. It's the rapport that is the most important."

And obviously the individual musicianship within the band has come on just a little.

"Yeah", Manzanera nods, finishing off his fruit salad, "I think so. Incredibly. Because it was lucky that first album actually got down on tape. Some of it... that was the strong side of the inspired amateurs policy that we were talking about.

"Paul had done a little bit of recording, but none of the rest of us had ever been in a studio before. And it was quite difficult to get those tracks down.

"Some of them do sound a bit dire, but everyone... a lot of people liked the overall atmosphere of that first album.

"In terms of actually playing – technique and being able to get down on tape a good performance – I think we're much more knowledgeable now. And able to do it. Which is great. That first album could have been much better if we'd known how to get it down."

"We were ambitious. And I think we were confident," continues Mackay as the coffee is brought.

"Ye-e-ees. I think we were. I think we felt that if we kept going long enough and that if we could get our equipment together and actually do the things we had in our heads that... we would astonish the world, you know?

"And that's what we aimed to do."

CHRIS SALEWICZ

Sonic svengali: Brian Eno outside the Continental Hyatt House hotel, LA, July 1974

TAKEN FROM MELODY MAKER 29/11/1975

IT is, perhaps, as a consequence of a certain adolescent commitment to rock music as a source of potential information about a contemporary social environment that it has become necessary to perpetuate the notion that the intrinsic strength and power of rock lies in the essentially primitive nature of its artistic expression.

A standard vocabulary has been formulated which depends, for its future, upon maintaining a particular kind of heroism.

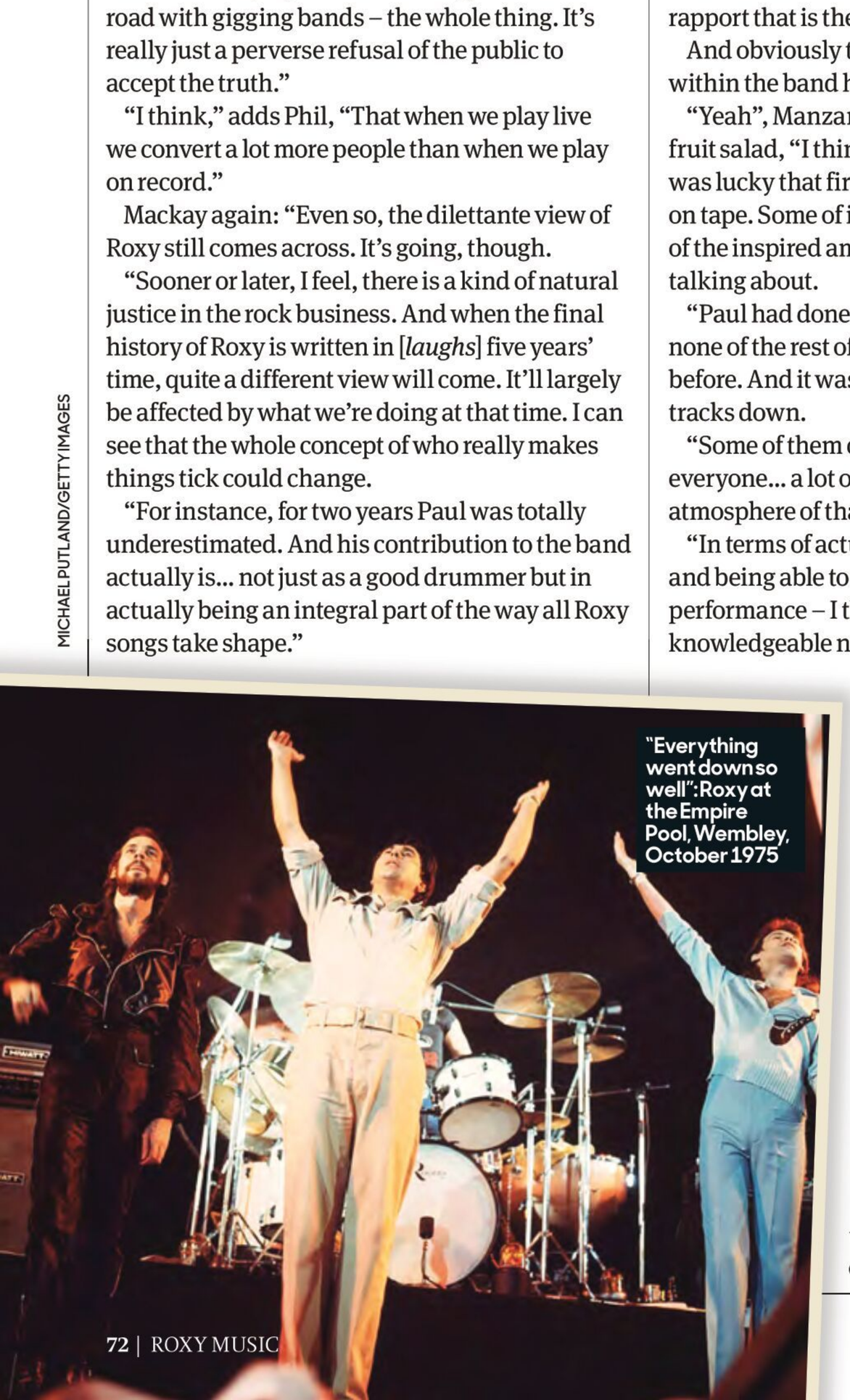
The traditional 'rock hero' is, largely, an inarticulate individual who is, however, able to force into his work, through some mysterious artistic process, images and impressions which are interpreted, eventually, as pertinent and vivid perceptions.

There is, then, a security in concentrating upon previously established impulses. The artist is inevitably more accessible, and his audience will not be disturbed since he is conforming to an image, however exciting it may initially appear, which is already stereotyped and therefore predictable.

Furthermore, there is a crucial lack of innovation. This situation, which is obviously not exclusive to rock, is on one level the basis of a series of lectures prepared by Brian Eno.

"The biological function of art," he insists, is that it should expose you to disorientation. When you are confronted by an artist, he should present you with a situation which violates the expectancies which he arouses.

"One of the problems I've found with recent records, for instance, is that they are all intended to induce one kind of listening behaviour, or at least they give the impression


"Everything went down so well": Roxy at the Empire Pool, Wembley, October 1975

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

that they are. There's no sense of experiment.

"The concept of the artist as someone who is paranormal, who contains within himself a special facility for DIRECTING the perceptions of his audience towards a specific goal, is now redundant. That particular role of the artist as a kind of passionate primitive creature, fighting against an oppressive system, doesn't ring true for me any more. It is really a studied stance, and it is exploiting an attitude that is redundant, even though it may still appear to be realistic for a lot of people.

"The point is that I can't perform the perceiver's role in front of such an artist because the discontinuity or expression he may be offering me is, probably, one that I've experienced so many times before, it no longer disorients me. It is redundant, then.

"I think the following quote illustrates the present problem and offers a tentative resolution: 'We rehearse for various roles of our lives. We rehearse our national, our local and our personal styles. These things we rehearse so that we may participate in a PREDICTABLE world of social and environmental interaction... Art is rehearsal for the orientation which makes innovation possible.'

"What I'm interested in is creating the kind of situation, or at least setting in motion procedures, which have no specific aim, and which end up in places you couldn't predict, so that you have to improvise new set of principles as you go along."

The lectures being presented by Eno at various colleges this month elaborate upon the principal qualities outlined above, but a practical application of the method of working he advocates can be found in this new album, *Another Green World*.

"I fed in enough information to get something to happen"

BRIAN ENO

Describing the nature of the experiment he was about to undertake in a conversation earlier this year, Eno described his intentions as, "an attempt to suspend the security of going into a recording studio with a predetermined plan. What I've done is write a few songs, and I'm going into the studio with every intention of not recording them if I can possibly help it.

"I have no idea of where I'm starting from and I don't have the vaguest notion of where I'm going to end up. It will be a way of learning to cope with unpredictable situations. The major problem of coping with the world – and art is a way in which we can cope with the world – is learning to adapt to the changes that inevitably occur.

"You're not in a position to stop or prevent those changes, all you can do is accommodate them. Now you can accommodate them in two ways: you can either refuse to acknowledge change and gradually you start not seeing anything, or you can try to live in an experimental fashion.

"Art is an entirely practical affair. It isn't mysterious. Take Robert Wyatt: art for him is a way of surviving. It's the way in which his brain keeps working, it's an activity which has to do with mental survival."

Another Green World, says Eno, was an attempt to place together a group of disparate individuals whose only similarity was an acute musical intelligence and to provoke a response to an unfamiliar and unpredictable environment, with no previously established boundaries.

"The specific purpose of the experiment was to put together this group which would work together in a way which would be impossible to predict. I fed in enough information to get something to happen, and the chemical equation of the interaction between the various styles of the musicians involved – who were intelligent enough not to retreat from a situation which was musically strange – took us somewhere that we would have been unable to design.

"We were working with no preconceived attitude other than that of conscious experimentation. And if something failed, we tried again. So many musicians are so frightened by the possibility of failure that they restrict their format to one that is almost bound to succeed, in the sense that it's bound to achieve something which can be predicted in advance. That's not what I would call success.

"Roxy, initially, was the practising ground for this idea of getting together a lot of people who aren't at all compatible and seeing what may happen. Roxy was a group of six people who were moving in quite separate directions. And the most interesting thing for me about early Roxy was the tension that existed and the way that no-one could be sure of the way a particular piece would develop. It was the very uncertainty which was exciting.

"If I listen to the first album now, I still find it a bold statement. But what happened is what happens to most bands: they become successful and they think that all that uncertainty must go. In fact, it's exactly that quality I want in music.

"Unfortunately, if you want to make a lot of money in rock music you have one good idea and then you do it again and again. You don't even have to have a good, original idea if you conform to the existing pattern." ✪ *ALLAN JONES*

Eno at Hilversum Studios, Holland, 1975

GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/REDFERNS, PICTORIAL PRESS LTD / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

THE SOLO ALBUMS

PHIL MANZANERA

RELEASED: 1975-2015

Experimental hippy. Swinging Latin player. Pink Floyd associate. Will the real Phil Manzanera, from amid his cast of thousands, please stand up? **BY NIGEL WILLIAMSON**

"THE perfect guitarist for avant-rock group," read the ad in *Melody Maker*. "Original, creative, adaptable, melodic, fast, slow, elegant, witty, scary, stable, tricky. Quality musicians only."

Phil Manzanera didn't initially get the gig and only joined Roxy Music five months later when first choice David O'List dropped out, but on the band's early albums he displayed all of those qualities with a dazzling flair. Yet he also knew that he was capable of more.

Growing up in Latin America, his Colombian mother had started teaching him South American folk songs on the guitar as a boy when the family was living in Havana before the 1959 Cuban revolution. "What I got from her was the groove – the rhythms she loved, cumbia and stuff like that," he later recalled.

Yet there was no outlet for this cosmopolitan facet of his musical personality in Roxy Music. "Nobody was interested in my South American side at all in the band," he complained. "I would say, 'Come on guys, let's groove it up a bit' but there wasn't a lot of space. So in my solo work, I started referencing some of those things."

Then there were his experimental jazz leanings, which he had explored in his pre-Roxy Music band Quiet Sun, modelled on Soft Machine. "I was playing eight bars in 7/15 time when I joined Roxy," he noted wryly. "I thought, 'This is wonderful, I didn't need to count time signatures any more.' I could just blast away and do mad things."

However, by late 1974, Manzanera was missing both his jazz improvs and his cumbia rhythms and was restless to find a broader canvas for his extra-curricular musical interests. Bryan Ferry had launched his solo career and with two Top 5 albums and three Top 20 singles, his achievement already rivalling the success of the band.

One of the nicest men in pop, Manzanera was far too gentlemanly to indulge in feelings of jealousy or resentment. But, as Andy Mackay put it, "After Eno left, the sense that we should all as individuals push our careers as Bryan spectacularly advanced his became more dominant."

When Mackay invited Manzanera to play on his first solo album *In Search Of Eddie Riff* (1974), the guitarist knew it was time to spread his own musical wings, too. "I thought, 'Right, I'm going to ask if I can do a solo record.' It was an excuse to get all my friends together to play on it," he recalled.

The "friends" numbered most of his Roxy Music colleagues, minus Ferry, plus members of Quiet Sun and kindred avant-garde spirits such as Robert Wyatt and Eno. Booking Island Studios for a month, Manzanera emerged with not one but two albums, *Diamond Head*, his solo debut and *Mainstream*, the only studio album ever attributed to Quiet Sun.

Above all, he felt creatively liberated by being away from Ferry's art-rock control-freak tendencies. "Bryan is a perfectionist. I'm the sort of opposite," he noted. "You can call that sloppy or you can call it intuitive. But I don't like to make everything perfect."

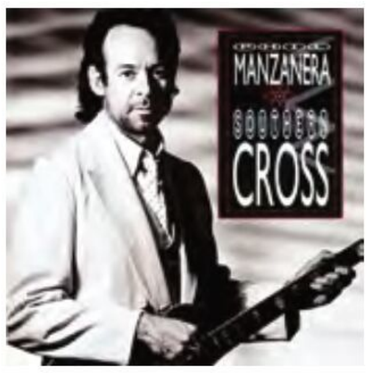
A sense of exploratory freedom and ambition pervades *Diamond Head*. "Frontera" and "Carhumba" channel Manzanera's Latin upbringing, while the psych-rock guitar tropes of "East Of Echo" and "Alma" reflect his affinity with David Gilmour, a friend since 1967 and with whom he would later collaborate on the Pink Floyd albums *A Momentary Lapse Of Reason* and *The Endless River*.

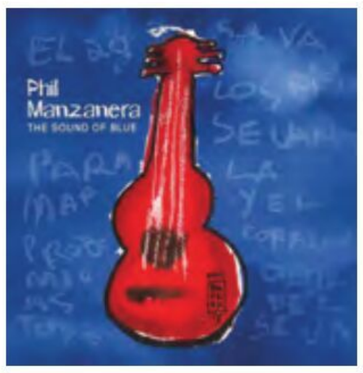
Meanwhile, his freejazz experimentalism was indulged adventurously on the Quiet Sun album, which at this distance

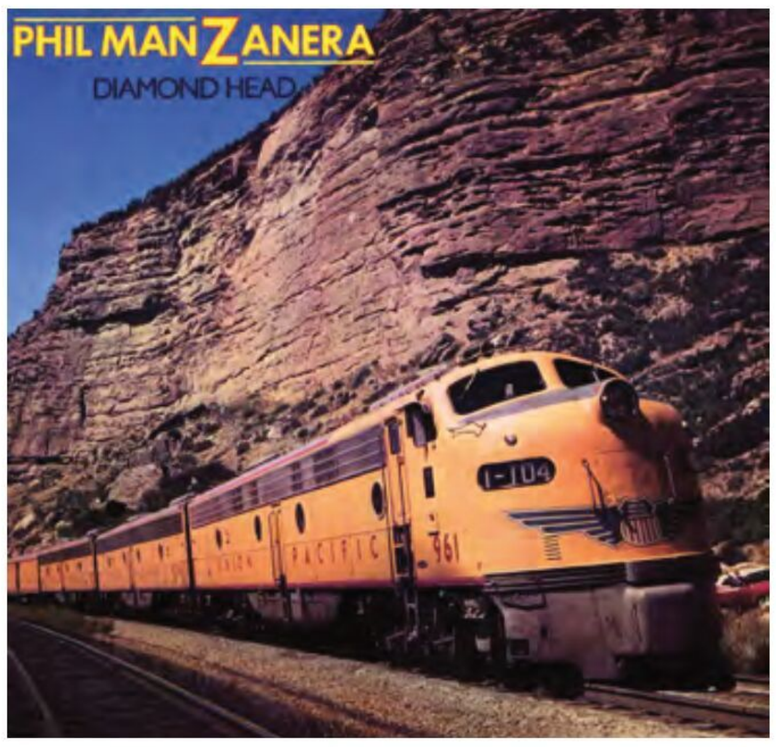
CRITICS' VERDICTS

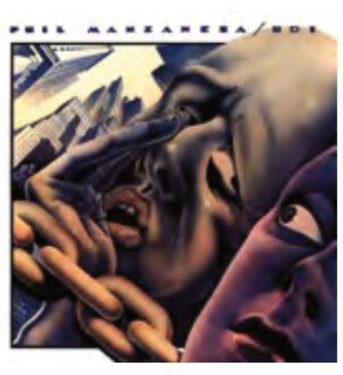
DIAMOND HEAD
"*Diamond Head* is, for the most part, a polished set of classy, lovingly constructed songs." Max Bell, NME, 19/4/1975

801 LIVE
"The selections almost obliterate their studio counterparts in terms of tension and spontaneity. Although most amenable, Manzanera's solo LP maintained a hedge-hoppingly low profile: potential excitement was often exchanged for painstaking exactitude." Angus MacKinnon, NME, 6/11/1976









TRACKMARKS

DIAMOND HEAD
8/10
Label: Island
Released: 1975
Produced by: Phil Manzanera
Recorded at: Island Studios, London
Highest chart position: UK 40; US –

QUIET SUN – **MAINSTREAM**
7/10
Label: Elektra
Released: 1975
Produced by: Quiet Sun
Recorded at: Island Studios, London
Highest chart position: UK – ; US –

801 – **801 LIVE**
6/10
Label: Polydor
Released: 1976
Produced by: 801
Recorded at: Queen Elizabeth Hall, London
Highest chart position: UK – ; US –

801 – **LISTEN NOW**
6/10
Label: EG/Polydor
Released: 1976
Produced by: Phil Manzanera
Recorded at: Basing Street Studios, London; The Manor, Oxfordshire
Highest chart position: UK –; US –

K-SCOPE
8/10
Label: EG/Polydor
Released: 1978
Produced by: Phil Manzanera
Recorded at: Sun Park Studios, Surrey
Highest chart position: UK – ; US –

PRIMITIVE GUITARS
7/10
Label: EG
Released: 1982
Produced by: Phil Manzanera
Recorded at: Sun Park Studios, Surrey
Highest chart position: UK – ; US –

SOUTHERN CROSS
6/10
Label: Agenda
Released: 1990
Produced by: Phil Manzanera
Recorded at: Gallery Studios, London
Highest chart position: UK – ; US –

VOZERO
7/10
Label: Expression
Released: 1999
Produced by: Phil Manzanera
Recorded at: Gallery Studios, London
Highest chart position: UK – ; US –

6PM
7/10
Label: Expression
Released: 2004
Produced by: Phil Manzanera
Recorded at: Gallery Studios, London
Highest chart position: UK– ; US –

50 MINUTES LATER
6/10
Label: Expression
Released: 2005
Produced by: Phil Manzanera
Recorded at: Gallery Studios, London
Highest chart position: UK– ; US –

FIREBIRD V11
7/10
Label: Expression
Released: 2008
Produced by: Phil Manzanera
Recorded at: Gallery Studios, London
Highest chart position: UK – ; US –

THE SOUND OF BLUE
7/10
Label: Hip-O/Universal
Released: 2015
Produced by: Phil Manzanera
Recorded at: Gallery Studios, London
Highest chart position: UK– ; US –

sounds more like an underrated minor masterpiece than ever.

Material from both records filled the set list of Manzanera's next project, 801, captured on the album *801 Live*, recorded in 1976 with Eno among his collaborators, after Ferry had put Roxy Music on hiatus. It was followed by 801's *Listen Now* (1976), the band's only studio album which was, to all intents and purposes another Quiet Sun record.

By the time Roxy reconvened, Manzanera had followed with anoher solo set, *K-Scope* (1978), a record with a cast of thousands that came trailing clouds of prog-rock glory and which led *Rolling Stone* to dub him "the world's last psychedelic guitarist".

Years later, the album was to net Manzanera a small fortune when Jay-Z and Kanye West sampled his guitar riff from the title track on their 2011 multi-platinum hit "No Church In The Wild". The royalties that ensued were "more than I've made in the past 15 years with Roxy", he said at the time.

PRIMITIVE GUITARS (1982) released the same year as Roxy's *Avalon*, was a collection of sophisticated instrumentals spanning Latin rhythms and Robert Fripp-style experimentation with even the hint of a disco beat.

Yet Manzanera was always more comfortable as a collaborator than a bandleader. Over the years there have been co-operative albums with Godley and Crème, John Wetton, Andy Mackay, Sergio Dias, Chrissie Hynde's ex Lucho Brevia and the poet Anna Le. *Southern Cross* (1990), an attempt to blend art-rock and Latin rhythms which was going to be an instrumental set until Tim Finn turned up to add a few guest vocals, was his only solo release in almost two decades until *Vozero* (1999), a world music-influenced set on which he sang in Spanish on two tracks.

> ROLLING STONE DUBBED MANZANERA "THE WORLD'S LAST PSYCHEDELIC GUITARIST"

It launched what was by his standards a prolific run of solo releases, driven by his growing frustration at Ferry's refusal to mark the Roxy reunion with a new studio album.

6PM (2004) featured Andy Mackay, Paul Thompson, Chrissie Hynde, Eno, Wyatt and Gilmour and included "The Cissbury Ring", a five-part prog-rock suite that sounded more 1969 than 21st-century, and "Wish You Well" a moving tribute to the late *NME* writer Ian MacDonald, a longtime Roxy associate who had improbably played bagpipes on *Diamond Head* and written material for 801.

Within less than 12 months Manzanera was back again with *Minutes Later* (2005) mixing psych guitar, free jazz, tango and electronica, while *Firebird V11* (2008) – named after the trademark 1964 red Gibson guitar he had played ever since *For Your Pleasure* – was another boldly ambitious set expressing every facet of his diverse musical persona.

His most recent set, *The Sound Of Blue* (2015), he described as an "audio memoir" of his musical travels, opening with a tune learned from his mother as a child in Cuba, and closing with a cheeky cover of the Jay-Z/Kanye West track which had so munificently topped up his pension pot.

In between, he deftly ticked just about all of the boxes in that demanding ad his Roxy Music colleagues had placed in *Melody Maker* more than 40 years earlier. "Quality musicians only", indeed.

"I did find the isolation very helpful": Ferry, exiled in LA, October 1977

ARCHIVE 1978

“As far as I’m concerned, everybody else can just go and fuck themselves”

Promoting a coolly received new solo venture, BRYAN FERRY tells ALLAN JONES about determination, high society and exactly what Roxy, now reformed, did for punk. “People probably feel that I’ve deserted them,” he says. “They probably feel I’ve been off on somebody’s yacht.”

TAKEN FROM
MELODY MAKER
16/09/1978

BRYAN Ferry is sitting across the room from me, his features obscured by the late weekend shadows.

It is almost two years since we met last, at Air Studios during the final sessions for his last album, *In Your Mind*. And, as our conversation chases the evening into darkness, and Ferry’s mood becomes increasingly estranged from the optimism of that last encounter, I am, simultaneously, increasingly preoccupied with the thought of how much he has become, since the release of that record and his subsequent exile in Los Angeles, the victim of caricature and critical assassination.

“I’ve realised for a long time that I’ve been disliked,” he said darkly when I mention his many recent detractors, “but it’s only lately that I’ve realised that I might actually be hated. It’s an unpleasant situation, but one I think I can accommodate. If people hate me, fuck them. I don’t need them. I’m sufficiently convinced of my own talent to be able to live without them. I’m as good as anyone else currently working in the field of rock music and better than most, I think. If some people don’t realise that, then they must be pretty fucking stupid, frankly.

“There are so many utterly mediocre talents being acclaimed at the moment that I have no real fears for my reputation. I know how good I am. I’m the most severe critic of my work; no-one is more critical of my work than I am myself. That’s why I take so

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

little notice of the so-called critics who are mostly ill-informed and illiterate idiots. I know how good I am, and as long as I have faith in myself, I'll continue. And, as far as I'm concerned at the moment, everybody else can just go and fuck themselves."

THIS is a critical time for Bryan Ferry. The architect of one of the most influential rock bands of the 1970s has lately become the target of nearly every disaffected critic with venom in his biro. He was always, perhaps, one of the most vulnerable of the rock elite; ridiculed often for his ambition, his intellectual aspirations, his mannered posturing, his affectations and conceits and his general flamboyance.

His talent, it has sometimes seemed, was almost disdainfully acknowledged and reluctantly recognised; many would prefer to concentrate upon his supposedly playboy image and his courting of sophisticated society. His success was frequently despised, simply because it was achieved with such irresistible momentum. Roxy Music refused to submit themselves to the gruelling graduation process to which most bands automatically surrender: suddenly they were with us, changing the face of popular music and enjoying the commercial adulation of the media and the rock audience. The backlash was inevitable and not long delayed. For as long as Ferry's records were successful he was relatively invulnerable; but with the demise of Roxy two years ago, since when he has pursued a solo career, his commercial fortunes have gravely fluctuated. *In Your Mind* was successful in most areas of the rock market, but it barely made even a tentative impact in America, whose audience remained indifferent to Roxy at their peak and can hardly be said to have embraced with any wild enthusiasm Ferry's solo projects.

Furthermore, the failures of his last two British singles – "What Goes On" and "Sign Of The Times" – have suggested that even his indigenous audience has deserted him. You can almost hear his critics baying in the wind, sharpening the hatchets for their appraisal of his new album, which is released this coming Friday.

The Bride Stripped Bare is reviewed elsewhere in this issue; I'll confine my views here to saying that I find the record, despite an initial antipathy and its own blatant failures, an emphatic success, reminiscent of Bowie's *Young Americans* in its desolate mood of personal reassessment. I suspect, too, that it will be equally maligned.

So, I think, does Bryan Ferry.

I AM CURIOUS: MELLOW

WE are in the West London home of Simon Puxley, the former Roxy Music "media consultant" and, more recently, one of the co-producers of *The Bride Stripped Bare*. Ferry and Puxley arrive from a photo session; the latter fusses about as Ferry settles himself down on the floor with a bottle of wine. The immediate conversation is casual. He remarks upon the changes he has noticed in Britain – he's been back for several months – and offers some observations upon his reactions to Los Angeles. He is clearly in good humour.

We begin by briefly discussing the world tour upon which he embarked after his last British concerts, and which immediately prefaced his sojourn in California. He is sensitive about reports that it was largely an unsuccessful venture, and contradicts them heartily, while admitting that America was not particularly overwhelmed by his presence.

"To be honest," he says, "I lost an absolute fortune on that tour. The gigs were mostly good, but there was a terrible problem with Atlantic, who simply didn't support the tour, which provoked something of a scandal. They didn't think there was a suitable single from *In Your Mind* and therefore they decided not to support the tour. Which is strange, I suppose, for a company that had such success with Led Zeppelin, say, who don't usually release singles. Atlantic actually wanted me to cancel the tour, which would have been even more disastrous: as it was I was disappointed, because that time I really wanted to put everything into being a success over there."

The conclusion of the tour found him, he says, in a pretty haggard condition. To recuperate, he went to Los Angeles, intending originally to spend two or three months there. "I was there actually for six months," he reflects. "It's very difficult to escape from LA for some people, it seems." Contrary to popular opinion, which had him constantly swanning about Bel Air at expensive parties, Ferry began working almost immediately upon the songs for *The Bride Stripped Bare*.

"I'm by nature lazy, but I always force myself to real or imaginary deadlines. I'm always thinking about work. Often, yes, it's an invisible process. But more and more it's been revealed to me that people don't appreciate that. Whenever you aren't around, as it were, with a record or on a tour, people tend to think you're doing nothing. But it's not like that. I'm always working, searching out the germ of an idea that will finally materialise and reach people on a plastic disc... I find that too exciting a proposition to ignore, you know."

Los Angeles, he says, was at first a strange and

"I try to impose no limits on any social experience"
BRYAN FERRY

"It's very difficult to escape": Ferry at his rented Bel Air home during a six-month sojourn in LA

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

alien environment: he had friends there, but knew few of the members of the musical community. Interestingly, he remarks that he eventually struck up a close friendship with Timothy Leary, whom he met through his friend Henry Edwards (a former rock journalist who was in Los Angeles working simultaneously on the screenplay of the *Sgt Pepper* movie and a book about Leary). He remains resolutely ambiguous about Los Angeles' value as an environment conducive to writing and recording; the natural indolence of the atmosphere he found ultimately defeating.

You have to work hard, he says, to find any specific source of energy: "Also, I felt terribly alien there, and the atmosphere made me, if it's possible, even more introspective than I've felt before... I felt very distant from most of the people I met – being a part-time cynic, there weren't too many people I was drawn to. Really, there are the most extraordinarily irresponsible people in Los Angeles. Especially the movie people, with whom I seemed to spend most of my time...

"And another curious aspect of LA is that there are actually so few places to go, to meet people. It isn't a nightclub place. There are only three or four places, and nobody really goes there. They're generally considered to be very tacky. And they are. I know, because I checked them out... So, you know, you tend to just go to parties. Somebody's always arranging something. A party down at Malibu or a garden party in Bel Air..."

And this rather attracted the hedonist in you?

"Oh, yes, inevitably," he laughs. "I was terribly intrigued by it. I always like to explore those situations. As a writer one always has this natural curiosity. That's why I always try to force myself into situations I might not otherwise find myself in, to explore aspects of different people. I try to impose no limits on any social experience. I can imagine no reason why I should."

He lived, while in Los Angeles, in the exclusive estate of Bel Air, where he rented a house – "It was considered tasteful by LA standards; a Spanish-styled affair with a pink tiled roof. Leslie Caron used to live there. All the houses have that kind of pedigree, of course. It was really quite remote. You could go for days without seeing anyone apart from the odd Mexican gardener."

I wondered whether the sheer affluence of that specific environment became, eventually, oppressive. It did, he says, once the novelty of living in such a status symbol area became tarnished: "But I'm not pretending I didn't enjoy it. I'm not that much of a hypocrite. And I did find the isolation very useful, you know. And I was really fascinated by Los Angeles. I think most Europeans are amazed by it. It is the landscape of movies, you keep getting all these strange flashbacks... But, you know, it's not really the kind of place I could live in forever. After six months I began to miss the greyness of Europe. I missed the contrast of climate and mood."

He is unable to isolate the specific affects of Los Angeles upon his writing, although he did compose one song, "Can't Let Go" a particularly tortured piece from *The Bride Stripped Bare* which he describes as his "meisterwerk about LA. It's an album about Los Angeles condensed into one song... Yes, it is violently ambiguous... I did often feel violent there, because it's so placid. It made me feel more like the Geordie rebel that I really think I am." The smile that follows this last remark immediate deflates its sardonic pomposity, and indicates that Ferry has said his last word on Los Angeles.

I mention that I had read that he was under some considerable pressure to establish himself finally in that country. He smiles grimly and acknowledges the truth of the report. His management, and his American record company, Atlantic, he says, were most insistent that he record "an American album".

He even had several meetings with Richard Perry, he recalls, but he remained adamant that he would not be sucked into that particular syndrome. "It was something," he continues, "that I didn't want to do. I never have wanted to make somebody else's album. Those guys are just too strong. It might, on the other hand, have been interesting to see what might have happened if I'd actually come up against one of them. Because I'm not going to be dominated by anybody, and those people tend to make their own albums.

"I played tennis with Richard Perry. He's a very good tennis player. But I'd never let him produce one of my albums. I can't actually think of anyone I'd ask to produce one of my records. I'd probably be the most difficult person for any producer to work with. Because I do have a clear idea of what I want and I also want my records to sound like nobody else's."

His album was eventually recorded in Montreux (and re-recorded, in part, in New York with Simon Puxley), with an Anglo-American cast of musicians, including Linda Ronstadt's guitarist, Waddy Wachtel, to whom he had been introduced at a Jackson Browne session. His selection as lead guitarist was, I ventured, quite untypical. "I agree," Ferry replies quickly, "that sort of laidback LA music isn't at all my style, but I can spot a good guitarist very easily. And the idea of Waddy playing with Neil Hubbard, I thought was very exciting."

The production of the album, he intimates, was an intense and emotional experience: its pervasive mood of melancholia being especially enhanced by the remote atmosphere of Montreux and its out-of-season desolation. "The only thing to do there was to make music. There were no distractions. It turned out to be the strangest album I've ever done... There was such a crazed atmosphere in Montreux. There was this band of musicians just stuck there. Like an Everest expedition or something. A real Men Without Women number," he smiles. "We just moved out there and dug in. I'm really searching for the words to describe it. It was possibly the most soulful musical experience I've ever been through. It was very remote and very lonely and very crazed."

The Montreux sessions provided, he adds, enough recorded material for a double album, and it was during the selection of the final tracks to be included that he began to nurse some lingering doubts about some aspects of the project.

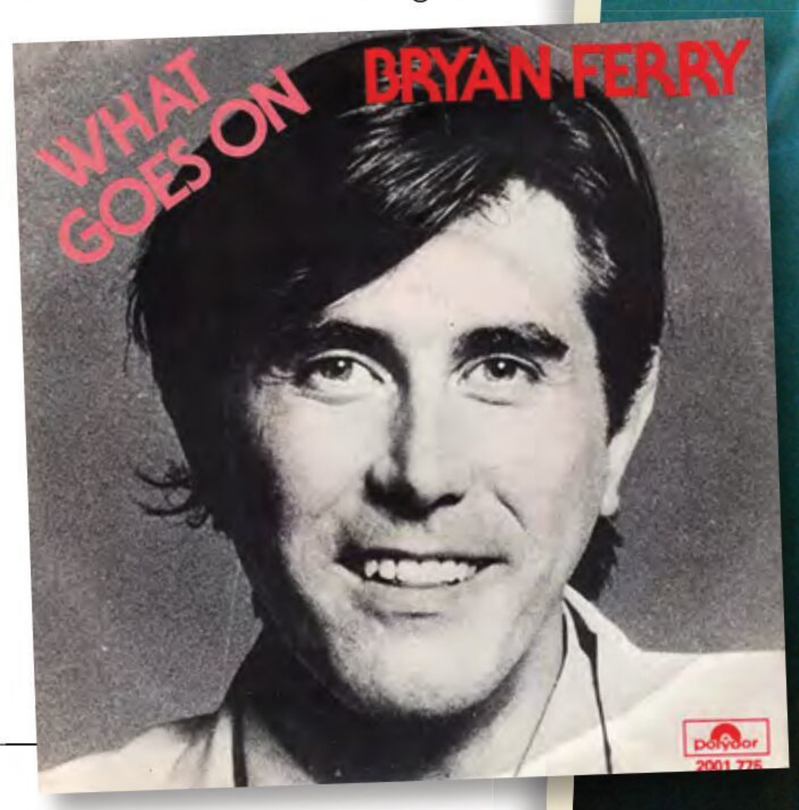
"After the album was finished," he explains, "I became unsure about it. I wondered, for instance, whether we'd put the right tracks on it. And when I finally came back to England I became more certain that I had to make some changes. Obviously, I wanted the album out six months ago. But, really, it just meant so much to me that I couldn't face putting it out not feeling happy with it.

"Now I feel that it's right. It was worth the delay. I really wanted this album to stand out, you know. I think it does... Of course, as always, it means that it isn't a good background-music album. My records never are. And that's something the listener has to contend with. In America they do like albums to be background music; that seems to be the formula for success.

"That's not what I'm interested in. Especially, at this time, with this album. I wanted it to be

Night operator: Ferry visits Amsterdam on the *In Your Mind* tour, March 1977

GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/GETTY IMAGES



extracts, if you like, of various styles and moods. And to get into the kind of art-conceit of the title (which is taken from a work by the painter Marcel Duchamp), the original *Bride Stripped Bare* was full of strange elements adding up to one thing, one statement. To me, that's what this album is. It has an Irish folk song, some early kind of Memphis things and an Al Green song and a Lou Reed song – I've always wanted to do a Lou Reed song. I like playing about with other people's songs. And, I hear, he was very pleased with this version."

ALL ABOUT BRYAN

THE *Bride Stripped Bare* is, Ferry makes clear, perhaps the most important and personal album he has yet recorded.

"It's a very, very emotional album," he stresses, as the shadows crowd around him. "It's rare that I'm actually moved while we're recording, but this felt like the real thing.

"It seems strange to sit here talking about it, so long after the event. One is in danger of almost waxing sentimental about it. But just to see these guys virtually crying through their instruments was extraordinary. It's not something I've experienced before. It's what music is really all about."

I admit to some surprise at his abundant confidence in the album: it had been suggested by some of his more scornful detractors – "an ever-growing club", he adds – that the delay in the record's appearance might be attributed to his own lack of conviction in its worth.

He is aghast at the notion. "It's absolutely untrue. God, no... I've been dying for it to come out. I wish it could have come out the week I came back to England. I just didn't want to put my name to anything that I wasn't sure about. That's why I changed it. Now, I'm sure about it. I don't have to defend it. I would never put out anything that I wasn't convinced about. Sure, this is a commercial art, but I'd never just put something out because pressure was being asserted on me... No, I couldn't do it.

"You know, this is such a funny business. It creates all kinds of predicaments. You make an album because you have to – because you feel that impulse... But at the same time, you want people to like it and to buy it, so that you become rich through it. But you can't let those factors overwhelm you. You have to squash them... You have to concentrate on the work, and believe in it, you know. And sometimes it's depressing, because there are certain records that you do which you feel totally right about, but they don't get through to people. They don't like them, or for some reason they simply don't want to involve themselves in the record. I feel in a sense that perhaps some people don't want to be involved with my career.

"It probably seems to a lot of people that I've been away for too long. They aren't to know that I've been working on this album. They probably

PENNIE SMITH

feel that I've deserted them. They probably feel I've been off on somebody's yacht."

Ferry offers this last remark with a kind of quiet bitterness, provoked by the way in which his public image has become – as far as he is concerned – so distorted. And the pursuit of further opinions about his current gossip-column status, which reached a peak with his estrangement from Jerry Hall (who left him for Mick Jagger), seems to encourage a mood of depression and infuriation.

"I'm tired of it," he says. "People are forever going on about this gossip-column coverage. It's not as if I have teams of PR people rushing about trying to get me into the gossip columns.

"You can't have your lifestyle limited or totally imposed on you by your audience. If some people in my audience were offended or put off me because I was being written about in gossip columns, then they should have realised that it wasn't something I particularly wanted. I mean, I tried to resist it..."

But surely there is an aspect of his ego that enjoys being written about by sophisticated fashion rags?

"Well," he begins patiently," I've always been involved in a small way with that world, just through the people I know. On the creative side of that world, I've always been drawn to creative people. And there are other creative people than musicians. And so I have friends in that particular world, and I will go to their parties. And I might get written about... I don't see why there should be a kind of penalty clause. I can't honestly see why it should be seen to be any worse than going to a football match and being written about for going to that... Anyway, if you ever saw me at that kind of party you'd notice that I'm always hiding from the bloody photographers, not posing for them."

"Look, I know Nigel Dempster but I don't invite him round"

BRYAN FERRY

But doesn't he ever feel pleased by the fact that his name is being circulated alongside other supposedly ritzy types?

Ferry in 1978: New Wave progenitor or past-it playboy?

"I certainly never sat back thinking how wonderful I must be for being accepted by café society. Perhaps at first, I'm not sure. Because at first I was putting myself about. I was trying to reach as wide an audience as possible. And not everybody reads the music papers. So at first, when you're trying to build up your career, you tend to be quite pleased when you're written about in any paper. Be it *Motor Racing Weekly* or *House & Garden*. You're trying to extend yourself, and your market."

You must have been, I suspect, somehow titillated by that kind of attention, though? You didn't exactly shy away fiercely from such exposure.

"You're right, I didn't. And perhaps it was a juvenile response, in a way. It certainly works against me now. And I think that's unfair. I think there are other people who do get mentioned in the same context who do actually solicit it, you know. I'm not going to mention their names, but you know who they are. And all I'm saying is that I was always fairly reluctant to appear in those things...

"I mean, look, I know Nigel Dempster. If I see him at a party I talk to him. But I don't invite him around to my place so that he'll write about me in his column. I just enjoy talking to him if I meet him. I'd rather talk to him than some kind of boring trade union official... But is any of this really relevant to the music?"

I think it's relevant in that reactions to your public image inform the attitudes toward the music, especially since there's been such a reaction against the kind of rock star image you epitomised.

"I can see that. In that sense it is probably very relevant to the commercial failure of my recent singles. That the last single, particularly, didn't do well was very disappointing. I thought it was a very relevant record. It was about what's happening now. The very title indicated that. It was always the track I wanted released as a single especially in Europe.

"I thought it was an important record. *Melody Maker* disagreed, I remember, and tore it apart. And it was praised to the hilt in *NME*... I thought actually that the *Melody Maker* review was based on a personal reaction to my image, you know. I didn't think that the music had actually been listened to at all."

Ferry is silent for a moment, considering the implications of the criticisms of "Sign Of The Times" made in this paper by Chris Brazier. "It was very strange," he eventually states. "He seemed obsessed by my playboy image, you know. Perhaps it had got out of hand... But it was weird being criticised for having an image when the whole Roxy thing had been about playing with images, which is exactly why a lot of people were attracted to the band.

"It seemed strange, too, that I should suddenly be deemed so unfashionable by the new wave, when the new wave itself was inspired a lot by Roxy Music. And to think now that people

aren't buying my records because of my image is extraordinary for me.

"Basically, I don't regret anything I've ever done. I know there are certain things I've done which are the very antithesis of the new wave – at least on the surface. Things like 'Smoke Gets In Your Eyes' are probably anathema to the new wave. Some of them would probably like to see me crucified for that. But there are other things I did with Roxy, like 'Street Life', that are probably more new wave than the new wave, you know. Or at least archetypal songs or new wave themes. And that's why I find it strange to think that there are people out there now, who're into the new wave, say, who can't identify with what I'm doing now. Probably because they may be unaware of Roxy and just think of me as some kind of playboy who occasionally makes records."

I wondered, then, whether he regrets contriving such an image and thinks, in retrospect, that it was a mistake to flirt so incautiously with fashion. He had never actually contrived a specific image, he insisted; he had been merely reflecting the versatile styles of the music he was writing and Roxy were playing. Rock music, he felt, was always so one-dimensional. He was determined to disrupt its placid surface.

"And obviously, if national papers and magazines see somebody coming out of a rock group who isn't a total stereotype, then they're going to write about him. Especially if he's going around with glamorous girls or he's seen in unusual situations.

"And, you see, for me an interesting life is being placed in these unusual, interesting situations. I've never confined myself to any limited situations. I'm a social explorer. But to be castigated for that by the people I feel closest to is really hurtful. It must make you more withdrawn, more sensitive to criticism. It's the price you have to pay.

"I realise that the more celebrated you become, the more notorious you become, then the more difficult it is for somebody like me to circulate. I can do it in New York because nobody knows who I am. I'm not John Travolta. But here there are limits. The only outlets tend to be uptown places. Café society places, if you like, and if you're seen there you're accused of betraying your audience, being a playboy. God, sometimes I just like a night out. Where am I supposed to go? Down the pub?

"You see, I started off life with nothing. Just a state education, you know. Nothing special, so there really is nowhere for me to go except upwards. Socially, anyway. But that doesn't mean you lose touch or that you become a terrible snob. I do like to study people. And some of the most intriguing people move in that kind of society. But that doesn't mean they're alien or that there isn't something to be learned from them. I hate it, therefore, that some people should try to prevent me from exploring that aspect of society by refusing to buy my records."

> **"Where am I supposed to go? Down the pub?"**
>
> **BRYAN FERRY**

Still, he has been forced to accept the fact that in some ways he has become a figure against which the new wave has rebelled as much as they did with the senile manoeuvres of the supergroups.

"I accept it as a commercial handicap now. But I'm not ashamed of the way in which I behaved, or anything I've ever done. But some people have always resented me. They resent the fact that I'm successful. They resent the fact that I like nice suits. They resent the fact that I obviously know what I'm doing. It's a pathetic kind of jealousy, really. They're just the people who will resent me, whatever I do."

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

BRYAN Ferry describes his new album as, essentially, "connoisseur's music". And he doesn't even blush when he uses the term; his critics, I tell him, will blast the phrase back in his face.

"That will be very sad," he says dryly. "But honestly, I think it's true. That's what I tell myself. I think there are very few people about who will like or appreciate it. There are very few connoisseurs about. So I might as well forget about treble-platinum sales, and just concentrate upon the music. Just get on with it. This happens all the time, of course. There's been a lot of great work that's been done that hasn't been a popular success. Standards, often, aren't terribly high; the commonplace is often accepted too easily...

"But there's a whole area of music that people are afraid to get into. Music like mine, I suppose: emotionally demanding music that often has a small but devoted audience.

And I sometimes think that I'm now going to have to be content with that kind of audience. It'll grow occasionally for short periods when I do something like 'Let's Stick Together', which was just a fun record. But it's not really the kind of thing I'd like to be remembered for. I'm capable of more subtle things than that. But of course subtlety doesn't sell a million records. It's the obvious that sells, not the subtle... and there are people who are simply not going to give this album the light of day simply because they think it's been made by the perfectly awful playboy character who doesn't care any more about music or life or anything...

"Like that review of 'Sign of the Times' in *Melody Maker* that we were talking about. I read that bloody review and it's all about this guy who supposedly spent £395 a night on a hotel room, and consequently has nothing to say to humanity. What am I supposed to say to a charge like that? To think that *Melody Maker* has somebody like that writing for them... and this is a paper I used to, like, deliver, used to buy every week... To think they have someone with insufficient brains, who believes I'm dumb enough to pay £395 a night on a hotel room. He doesn't deserve to write the ads at the bloody back. You know: 'Guitarist wanted. Hair, Image, No Time-wasters.' He doesn't deserve to be doing that or even driving the paper around to the bloody newsagents.

"What am I supposed to think about things like that? What kind of dumb people are they employing to write the paper... God, you try living for three months in a fucking hotel room, man, working on a new LP, trying to improve upon the last record and the record before that... And you're digging within yourself to try to do something to turn yourself and everyone else on.

"It sounds dreadfully like the old art-is-suffering number, I know. But there's an incredible pressure on you. My whole shirt was on the album. I don't need some ridiculous cub reporter criticising me for how much – and it was a hell of a lot less than that – I was paying to stay in a fucking hotel. He didn't write about the record. He wrote about me. And he even got that wrong. You can't get away with saying that I have nothing to say to humanity, man. That's just too heavy a thing to say about anybody."

This sudden tirade, though it is not delivered at any hysterical pitch, seems to emphasise the extent to which Ferry has been bruised by his experiences over the last two years. It's an experience, furthermore, which he has truthfully reflected on *The Bride Stripped Bare*, an album of occasionally painful self-doubt and self-examination; moods which Ferry now seems to be introducing to the interview, too.

"I'm always easily discouraged," he offers. "I have tremendous drive on one hand, tremendous motivation. But I really need enthusiasm from other people to help me bring it out. When I'm making records, if I don't have

GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/REDFERNS

Jerry Hall and Ferry at the Amstel Hotel, Amsterdam, 1976

The reactivated Roxy recording *Manifesto* with ex-Vibrators bassist Gary Tibbs (right), 1978

somebody around me who's really enthusiastic, I'll be the first to get depressed. And I'll be convinced that everything I've done is terrible, and I'll want to stop and give it all up. But I can't, you know... And this is what happened to me when I was in LA.

"I went through a very bad personal patch. I was wondering why, exactly, I was doing anything... I'm by nature a very moody person, and that was a mood I went through for a long time. It didn't seem as if there was any support for my work. Which is something I've always needed."

He repeats that criticism from the press might hurt him personally, especially where it is ill informed or simply malicious, but he is more deeply concerned by the apparent indifference – as he defines it – of the public to his most recent music. Almost obsessively, he returns to "Sign Of The Times", stressing once more the injury he felt when it was ignored.

"The disappointment hasn't really sunk in," he says sombrely, "but I was terribly sad when it didn't take off. But all this has to be placed in perspective. It's hardly a full-scale disaster to have a couple of flops. We'll see how the album goes before we start writing the obituaries. Maybe the album's doomed. I don't think it is; even though I'm aware that these last singles have done worse than anything else I've ever done.

"I'm especially disappointed, artistically, that there's been so little response. Money in this case doesn't matter. It's the fact that nobody seemed to want them. I'm not utterly despondent. I haven't slashed my wrists yet. It hasn't reached that stage.

"It seems that because I seem to have been away for so long, people have ceased to identify with my work. I can only hope that the album will attract back those people who may have felt less interested in the singles. I know, you see, that I had a very strong affinity with the Roxy audience. I think that the affinity probably still exists. I don't feel as if I've lost my touch or anything. I still think I can really touch people through my music. I still think I retain a talent to capture and convey the mood of the times, in the manner which, I think, Roxy did."

FOR A FEW DOLLARS MORE

THESE references to Roxy inevitably provoke the expected inquisition about the recently announced reformation of the band. Ferry is reluctant to elaborate upon the original news story carried by the press. They would have preferred, he says, to have maintained a level of privacy about their rehearsals, which he claims have been so far very informal:

"We're finding out, really, what exactly we have to say to each other musically. I can't be more specific."

I suggest to him that the reunion will be seen by many as a purely mercenary venture, and will be taken by some as further evidence of his comparative failure as a solo artist.

"It would sadden me to think that," he says. "I think Roxy can still contribute something valid musically. If we were reforming just for the money we'd have gone about it differently. But it's too early really to talk about our plans in any detail at the moment... We're just working toward making another Roxy album.

"I always thought we would. Roxy never really ended. And if there are some people, as you suggest, who think we should not record together again, well, all I can say is that I'm not going to be dictated to by those people. I think the prospect of us working together is really intriguing. And so far we're all pleased."

But won't the reunion, whatever the musical results, be overshadowed by the suspicion that you've just reformed Roxy to reassert your own popularity.

"People will say that, I suppose. But those people simply aren't to be considered. They aren't really interested in my work. They're just interested in criticising me. I can't let them worry me, otherwise I'd probably never do anything again, you know. I won't be intimidated. I try to stretch myself all the time. I'm still full of ideas. I'm always driven to do new things. Therefore, there might be some people who won't be able to take this new album. It's by far the most personal and emotional album I've done. Some people will find it uncomfortable to listen to, I'm sure. Maybe people don't even want to hear this kind of stuff. I'm fucked if I know.

"I haven't prepared an answer to the possibility. Jesus, it's not something I really think about. If it is a failure, come back to me and I'll give you an answer. I'll still be here. Nobody's getting rid of me that easily. I've made that clear enough. I think I have to be credited with a little more determination. And that's as much as I can say at the moment. We'll just have to see what happens. And leave it at that." ✪

"Roxy can still contribute something valid musically"

BRYAN FERRY

PENNIESMITH

Flaring up: Roxy Music at Montreux Festival, Switzerland, May 1973

ROXY MUSIC SINGLES

The band's terrific in-career 45s.

BY MARK BEAUMONT

TO listen through Roxy Music's 7" canon is to hear the steady step of 1970s and '80s pop music foreshadowed. If "Virginia Plain" emerged as an art pop sister piece to *Ziggy Stardust* for the international jet set in 1972, in retrospect it sounds more like the wealthy papa of Sparks' "This Town Ain't Big Enough For Both Of Us" today, with its freewheeling pace and pounding pianos. "Love Is The Drug" imagined new wave while the Modern Lovers, Blondie and Television were in their recording infancies. And in "Angel Eyes" and "Dance Away" they presented '80s synthpop and new romanticism, fully formed, to the Visage acolytes who had flocked to London's Blitz club partly in their honour.

Eras of the band, too, become more sharply defined. Eno's art pop age makes their initial run of singles an unpredictable and adventurous introduction. The imperial phase of *Stranded* to *Siren* stands out as a period of slick groove rock perfected. And their return in the late-'70s finds them remarkably in step with the times, and ahead of the next synthpop curve. If their later singles – "Avalon", "More Than This", "Jealous Guy" – were the work of a far softer-edged, more luxuriant band than their early releases, they marked the evolution of an outfit from the arty futurist projection of debonaire sophistication to the plush embodiment of it. If the Roxy 45s tell us anything it's that, if you can visualise it clearly enough, you might be able to bring it to pass.

VIRGINIA PLAIN

EG, AUGUST 1972

We are flying down to Rio! Roxy's exotic fashionista image was cemented with a debut single, recorded and released in the wake of their first album. A tremulous glam pop rattle that certainly took us on a rhythmic rollercoaster, it referenced Warhol superstar Baby Jane Holzer in a surrealist torrent of high-living images: casino floors, cha-chas 'til dawn, celebrity hook-ups in Acapulco. At this point this was mostly fantasy – the song was inspired by an image Ferry had painted based on the Virginia Plain cigarette packet – but would prove a self-fulfilling prophesy.

Highest chart position: UK 4; US –

GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/REDFERNS

PYJAMARAMA

ISLAND, MARCH 1973

Ferry's first composition on guitar, written for *For Your Pleasure* but omitted from the finished record, was something of a revelation thanks to its melding of Beatledelic psych rock with a very louche '70s pop sophistication. If this amorphous love song confused listeners at first, it eventually won them over – after 12 weeks on the charts it peaked at No 10.

Highest chart position: UK 10; US –

DO THE STRAND

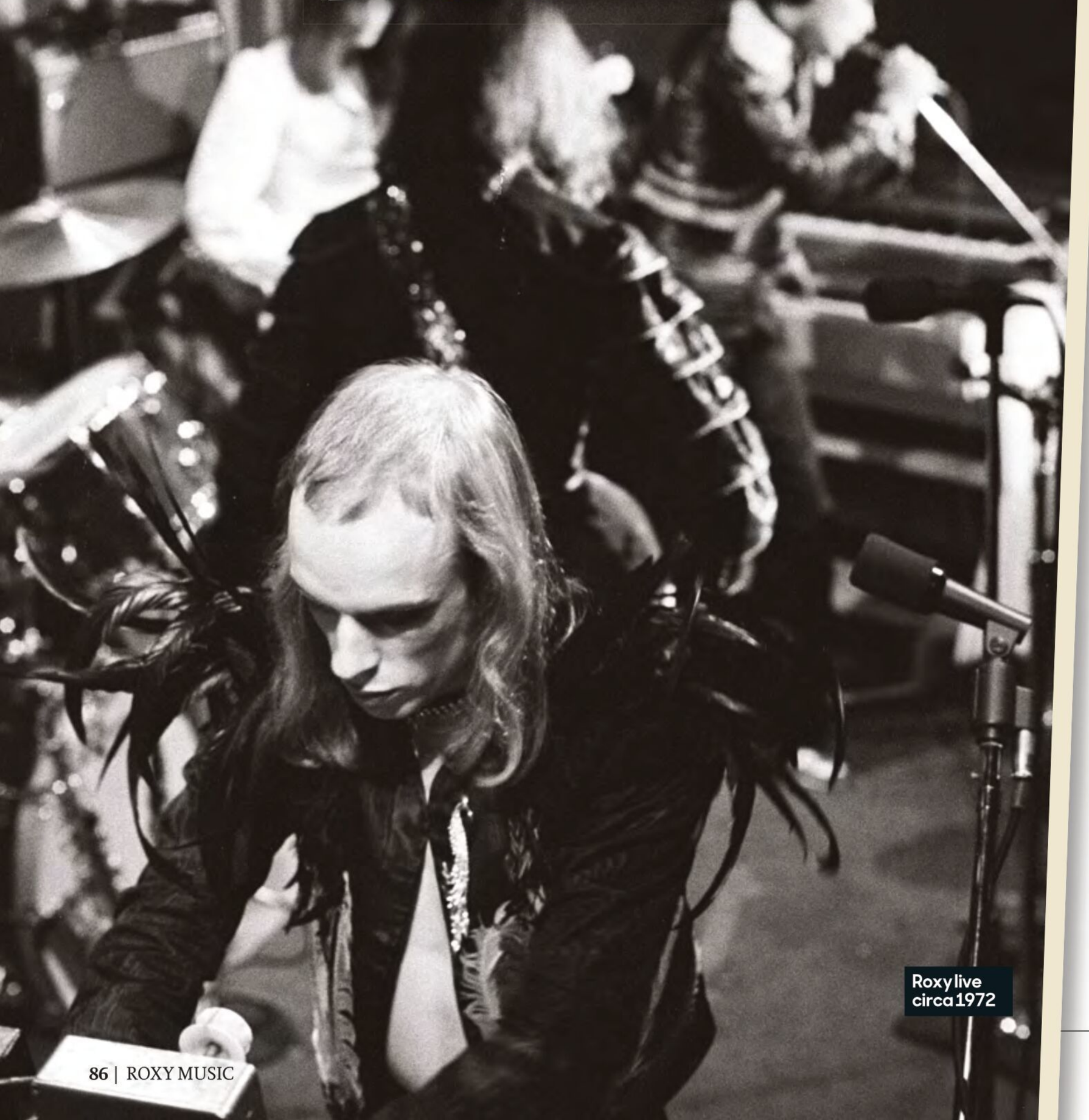
ISLAND, JULY 1973

One of Roxy's most popular tracks enjoyed an inauspicious early life. Inspired both by the golden age songwriting of Cole Porter and Irving Berlin and by '60s dance craze songs like "The Twist", its attempts to launch a new "dance of life" disco trend were hampered by several issues. It was initially released outside the UK but wouldn't see a British release until 1978, when it would fail to chart. It's cacophonous saxophone, pounding piano and twisted tango rhythm didn't suggest any coherent steps. And while we were told where to Strand (on tables at Mabel's, down the Lido or, if you can manage it, on moonbeams and rainbows), what to wear while Stranding (furs and blue jeans preferred) and who we'll be Stranding with (Nijinsky, various exotic nationalities, some paintings, books and national monuments), no chart or pictoral guide as to how The Strand should be performed was provided. Nonetheless, a cracker.

Highest chart position: UK - ; US –

Ferry the charmer was in full flow on "The Thrill Of It All"

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES



Roxy live circa 1972

STREET LIFE

EG, NOVEMBER 1973

Eddie Jobson, replacing Eno for *Stranded*, announced his arrival with the atonal street noises opening "Street Life" – using sound effects from a Moroccan market after an experiment to hang a microphone from the Air Studios window proved ineffective. Despite some metallic screeching and Ferry's subliminal adverts for chocolate brands like Black Magic and Milky Way, the song's exuberant melodicism marked a shift away from Roxy's early art assault, as Ferry escaped nuisance phone callers for a strut around some colourful avenues. At shows, this would be the cue for tuxedo clad fans to invade the aisles like they were the St Tropez promenade.

Highest chart position: UK 9; US –

THE THRILL OF IT ALL

ISLAND, OCTOBER 1974

The strident rock sounds of the early '70s came to bear on Roxy on the lead single from *Country Life*, to little chart effect. For all Manzanera's intricate neck-work, Mackay's impassioned sax and Jobson's wild strings, the single flopped. Were audiences unable to imagine themselves on Roxy's rollercoaster ride. Still: "Keep cooool...." is timeless advice for all.

Highest chart position: UK - ; US –

ALL I WANT IS YOU

ISLAND, OCTOBER 1974

Ferry the charmer was in full flow on *Country Life*'s most successful single cut, eschewing one-night stands for *"a night that lasts for years"* as he tries to win back the one girl that's ever truly entranced him. He even breaks out some French, and the band break out some of their steamier rock'n'roll skills. Trivia note: B-side "Your Application's Failed" was drummer Paul Thompson's only Roxy writing credit.

Highest chart position: UK 12; US -

LOVE IS THE DRUG

EG, SEPTEMBER 1975

Pop's most notorious romance junkie hits the singles bars for a fix, and finally gets scouted by America. The slinky funk and radio-darling hook of *Siren*'s lead single – originally a far slower, churchier track when Mackay wrote the core folk-harmony groove on his Wurlitzer inspired by Ralph Vaughan Williams – has been cited as an early influence on new wave, and Ferry's eyepatch for its *Top Of The Pops* performance the root of new romanticism, despite it being worn because he'd walked into a door. "Love Is The Drug" would see two post-Roxy single releases, a live version emerging in 1990 and a Faithless remix in 1996.

Highest chart position: UK 2; US 30

BOTH ENDS BURNING

ISLAND, DECEMBER 1975

Roxy's "Help!", *Siren*'s second single concerned the strains of touring and fulfilling Island's recording expectations at the same time. To its credit, this galloping synth rock sprawl didn't smack of the exhausting late-night sessions or Ferry being late with lyrics, and became a strong setlist mainstay.

Highest chart position: UK 25; US –

TRASH

ISLAND, FEBRUARY 1979

Embracing the New Wave age after a four year hiatus, the reduced-staff *Manifesto* era Roxy Music harkened back to their art rock roots with this Wire-like clamour of gothic guitar, Jam bass and freeform sax breaks sounding remarkably like there's a rabid kazoo loose in the studio.

Highest chart position: UK 40; US –

RB/REDFERNS

Songs for Europe: Roxy at Vorst Nationaal, Brussels, June 4, 1980

DANCE AWAY

ISLAND, APRIL 1979

Passed over for two of Ferry's solo albums, "Dance Away" finally got its moment on *Manifesto* and more than proved its worth. Ushering in Roxy's tropical cocktail lounge era – right down to an electronic samba beat and castanets – it became one of their biggest hits and the UK's best-selling single of 1979.

Highest chart position: UK 2; US 44

ANGEL EYES

POLYDOR, AUGUST 1979

Realising on which side their dancefloor was buttered, Roxy re-recorded the quirky, post-punk, Bowie-indebted album version of "Angel Eyes" for the single release, turning it into a soulful disco confection swathed in slap bass, proto-'80s synthpop textures and harp. The Communards and Yazoo were clearly taking notes.

Highest chart position: UK 4; US –

OVER YOU

POLYDOR, MAY 1980

Written within the first five minutes of Ferry and Manzanera jamming together at Manzanera's new home studio, *Flesh + Blood*'s glossy synth update of 1950s shake shack pop doesn't get the credit it deserves as the stepping stone between Springsteen sax rock and the melodic indie pop soon to be popularised by Orange Juice and XTC.

Highest chart position: UK 5; US 80

OH YEAH

ATCO/REPRISE/EG, JULY 1980

Flesh + Blood's second single was a lush emulation of mainstream US synthrock, right down to Ferry's tale of a lovelorn film buff driving alone to a movie show to try to recapture the romance of an idyllic, bygone drive-in date.

Highest chart position: UK 5; US -

SAME OLD SCENE

REPRISE/EG, OCTOBER 1980

Roxy were dovetailing perfectly with the burgeoning new romantic scene by the release of "Same Old Scene", where many of the '80s pop textures were predicted, from U2's chiming reverb to the synthetic grooves of Duran Duran and Ultravox.

Highest chart position: UK 12; US –

GIEKNAEPS/GETTY IMAGES

Performing "More Than This" on German TV's *Na Sowas!*, April 26, 1982

IN THE MIDNIGHT HOUR

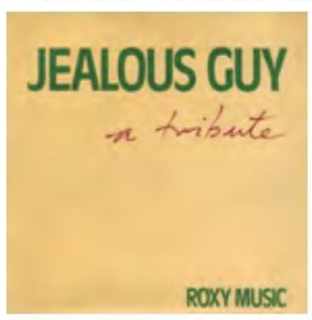
ATCO, NOVEMBER 1980

Squeezing a fourth single from *Flesh + Blood*, albeit only in the US and Portugal, Roxy clearly believed that America was ready for the gentle synth pop version of Wilson Pickett's R&B classic which they'd first played on Kenny Everett's TV show. America had other ideas.

Highest chart position: UK n/a; US –

JEALOUS GUY

POLYDOR/EG, FEBRUARY 1981



In the wake of John Lennon's murder in 1980, Roxy Music began playing his 1971 *Imagine* track "Jealous Guy" live. Recorded as a between-albums single, their expansive soft rock take became Roxy's biggest UK chart hit and defined the music world's mourning period.

Highest chart position: UK 1; US 80

MORE THAN THIS

POLYDOR, 1982

Like a musical mist rolling in over the west coast of Ireland, the first single from *Avalon* – and Roxy's last Top 10 hit – was a hazy affair, a gauze of synthesised mood music over which Ferry mused on the meaningless emptiness of existence. We're not in Acapulco any more, Baby Jane.

Highest chart position: UK 6; US –

"More Than This" was a hazy affair, a gauze of synthesised mood music

AVALON

WARNER BROS, APRIL 1982

"Now the party's over..." Almost, and Roxy appeared to be winding down on the uber-gentle tropical title track from *Avalon*. Featured superb backing vocals from Haitian singer Yanick Etienne, whom Ferry came across in a neighbouring studio during recording, and came with a high-class country house video directed by Ridley Scott, fresh from *Alien*.

Highest chart position: UK 13; US –

TAKE A CHANCE WITH ME

EG, SEPTEMBER 1982

Edited for single release, the final Roxy Music studio song to be released by the band encapsulated their drift towards easy-on-the-ear lounge pop, although some of Manzanera's guitar work is mildly akin to The Cure's contemporary gothic phase.

Highest chart position: UK 26; US –

LIKE A HURRICANE

POLYGRAM, MARCH 1983

Taken from "The High Road" EP recorded live at the Glasgow Apollo on the *Avalon* tour, Roxy's cover of the Neil Young classic brought ethereal synths, sophisticated funk and an air of debonaire seduction to the table.

Highest chart position: UK - ; US - ✪

KPA/ARTHUR GRIMM/UNITED ARCHIVES VIA GETTY IMAGES

MANIFESTO

RELEASED: MARCH 16, 1979

The Pistols' favourite dinosaurs, Roxy sit out punk and return with a disjointed snapshot of a chaotic decade.

BY TERRY STAUNTON

PUNK rock's Year Zero stance of dismissing all that went before had a handful of notable exemptions. When the Sex Pistols were looking for a producer they decided upon Chris Thomas, largely because of his long association with Roxy Music.

The group were such fans, guitarist Steve Jones wrote in his autobiography, *Lonely Boy: Tales From A Sex Pistol*, that they briefly considered calling themselves The Strand, in honour of "Do The Strand". He also claimed that he and John Lydon initially bonded over a shared fondness for "In Every Dream Home A Heartache".

"We loved Roxy Music, they were a band that broke so many barriers," Lydon confirmed in a 2014 radio interview. "They were poncey, pontificating, absurd, overly melodramatic and absolutely adorably excellent. It was stunning the way they drew all of us in."

It's perhaps surprising, then, that one of the few established acts who escaped punk's sneer and derisory "dinosaur" label should have sat out the whole scene. Roxy went into hibernation after the release of *Siren* in late 1975, and with the exception of the following year's archival live album, *Viva!*, wouldn't return until punk had all but spat itself dry in 1979.

If labels and/or pigeonholes are your thing, there is a case to be argued for *Manifesto* being one of the very first "post-punk" albums, but it's a schizophrenic record to say the least. The opening title track "Manifesto" and first single "Trash" both flirt with the artiness of, say, Talking Heads or even Wire, although its big hits ("Dance Away", "Angel Eyes") represent the first steps towards the sleek AOR that would dominate future releases.

"Angel Eyes" is a curio. The original album version is pretty much a straightforward four-on-the-floor rock track punctuated by Andy Mackay's off-kilter sax breaks, but it was replaced by the almost entirely re-recorded disco version after its single success, the first version only reinstated on a 1999 remaster. That willingness to chop and change – even once the record was in shops – suggests a more fluid approach to the band's working methods after some time away.

Bryan Ferry pursued a solo career during the group's hiatus, guitarist Phil Manzanera busied himself with the experimental outfit 801, while Mackay had topped the album charts courtesy of the songs he co-wrote for the ITV rock biz drama *Rock Follies*, and *Manifesto* somehow manages to combine elements of all those extra-curricular activities.

"That's the good thing about working together, we incorporate the best of all the other ideas we've learned," Manzanera told US magazine *Trouser Press* shortly after the album's release. "We're learning to work together again, and we've become much more constructive than before. There's a much freer input of ideas."

Ferry, however, remains the de facto ideas man, credited as writer of all 10 tracks (four in tandem with Manzanera, one with Mackay). Drummer Paul Thompson also returns, but there's no sign of *Siren* bassist John Gustafson or the violin and keyboards of Eddie Jobson, those berths filled this time around by, respectively, Gary Tibbs (post-Vibrators, pre-Adam

CRITICS' VERDICTS

"In many ways the band have come full circle without evolving anything dramatically new – at least not according to those initial standards." Max Bell, NME, 10/3/1979

"It wishes to satisfy those who bought 'Virginia Plain' while making genuflections to present-day American radio culture." Richard Williams, MM, 17/2/1979

TRACKMARKS

1. Manifesto ★★★★
2. Trash ★★★★
3. Angel Eyes ★★★
4. Still Falls The Rain ★★★
5. Stronger Through The Years ★★★★
6. Ain't That So ★★★
7. My Little Girl ★★★
8. Dance Away ★★★★
9. Cry Cry Cry ★★★
10. Spin Me Round ★★★

Label: EG/Polydor
Produced by: Roxy Music
Recorded at: Ridge Farm Studio, Rusper; Basing Street Studio, London
Personnel: Bryan Ferry (vocals, keyboards, harmonica), Andy Mackay (sax, oboe), Phil Manzanera (guitars), Paul Thompson (drums), Gary Tibbs (bass), Alan Spenner (bass), Paul Carrack (keyboards)
Highest chart position: UK 7; US 23

& The Ants) and Paul Carrack (soon to replace Jools Holland in Squeeze).

By dividing the album into "East" (Side One) and "West" (Side Two), Roxy may be trying to illustrate the contradictions inherent in the reconvened group. The East selections offer a connection to the past, although even the six-minute opus "Stronger Through The Years" only skirts around the avant-garde the band more fully embraced before. If we are to take the album's divisions at geographical face value, East has a more detached European mindset, the title track's own oblique manifesto (*"I am for the revolution's coming/Don't know where she's been"*) in keeping with the Roxy of *For Your Pleasure*.

"Trash", meanwhile, is a snapshot of subversion, a reminder that from the start Roxy had been intent on railing against rock's norms, striking the kind of anti-traditionalist stance which endeared them to the punks in the first place. Flip the vinyl over to head out West and you'll find Roxy more fully embracing the familiar American pop tropes they'd only begun to touch on with the likes of "Love Is The Drug" in 1975; exploring minimalist dance grooves ("My Little Girl"), blue-eyed soul balladry ("Spin Me Round") and faux Motown foot-tappers ("Cry, Cry, Cry"). Quite what Messrs Lydon and Jones made of it all we may never know.

Some critics were confused, others nonplussed. Writing in *Rolling Stone*, Greil Marcus conceded that the album "has its moments" but was scathing towards Ferry: "He's rarely traded on such banality, and he mouths the lyrics as if he hopes no-one will hear them."

It could be argued that "banality" was an intentional factor in Ferry's thinking, especially when taking the album's sleeve into account. As with previous releases, the singer "co-conceived" the look of the record with fashion designer Antony Price, but the elegant models of yore have been replaced by the artifice of lifeless mannequins, interpreted in some quarters as an ambivalent, anti-erotic reaction to Roxy's earlier visual representation.

Might it be a subtle statement on the disposable nature of glamour and fashion? The fact that Price's King's Road boutique Plaza is mentioned in the lyrics of "Trash" adds a touch of weight to the theory, but it's difficult to construct a unifying theory about *Manifesto* as it flits from the detached ennui of "Still Falls The Rain" (*"No more can I explain/I've tried with words in vain/They pass you by like falling rain"*) to the romantic melancholy of "Dance Away", from the title track's stream-of-conscious indifference (*"I am that I am from out of nowhere/To fight without a cause"*) to the greeting-card simplistic woo of "Angel Eyes".

IT'S distracting to attempt to assess *Manifesto* as the full-blooded return of a much-loved band, out to re-establish itself in a radically changed marketplace. To a large degree, the album is not about Roxy Music as much as it is the world to which they've returned. In the absence of a cohesive narrative, we're offered a series of snapshots that acknowledge those changes, both in music and in the wider world of "art", a broad overview or disjointed précis of a decade that was nearing its end.

Perhaps fittingly the main players were insistent that this was not a reunion or reformation, despite the anticipation that naturally accompanied the arrival of a new record credited to the group. During their time apart all four members dismissed suggestions they had split and stressed there would be more to come after an extended break – but a break of four years inevitably gave the project an air of importance that neither Ferry, Manzanera nor Mackay welcomed, or even felt the album warranted. Roxy Music were back, but as Ferry himself might have put it, t'ain't no big thing. ✪

ROXY MUSIC

FLESH + BLOOD

RELEASED: MAY 23, 1980

Can you reconcile punk and disco? Out goes Paul Thompson, in comes Gary Tibbs as Roxy attempt to find out, with popular but mixed results. **BY JASON ANDERSON**

IN 1979, all concerned parties seemed convinced that there should be a Roxy Music again. Having sent *Manifesto* into the Top 10 and its two singles into the Top 5, audiences in the UK were sufficiently enthusiastic about the matter, too. But as the band began work on their seventh album, the question that needed to be resolved was what this Roxy Music ought to be. The challenges posed by both punk and disco demanded a more decisive and coherent response than the band had managed on their erratic first effort after reconvening. It was ludicrous to expect them to go full bore toward one or the other of popular music's two extremes – acts of desperation weren't Roxy Music's thing. Yet the band were very much thinking along the lines of some of those fast-maturing punks. Bands like Japan, Simple Minds, ABC and Duran Duran were among the many who recognised the ways that the high-gloss dance music of the day could be remodelled to make more idiosyncratic rock.

With *Flesh + Blood*, Roxy Music beat them to the punch. Rich with shimmering textures and impeccable grooves, the most perfect passages of *Flesh + Blood* answered the question of what a Roxy Music of the '80s should be. It's there in the symphonic, epiphanic rush of "Oh Yeah", the lush yet propulsive pop of "Over You", and in the murkier, foggier funk of "No Strange Delights" and "Rain Rain Rain".

It's also there in their overhaul of The Byrds' "Eight Miles High", which replaced the original's acid-fuelled energy with cocaine bravado. On lesser tracks, the album can sometimes seem less like a triumph than a set of designs for the one to come with *Avalon*. But either way, that's a remarkable achievement for a band that was very nearly stuck in a place they'd never been: behind the curve.

Nor was it easy getting back up to speed. Bryan Ferry's efforts to become a solo superstar having plateaued, he was wise to leave LA and revive the Roxy brand. But by clinging to his public image as a lovelorn lounge lizard trapped in a Ritz-Carlton cage, he seemed perilously out of step with the new-wavers trying to crash the hotel.

Ironically, one of the first moves by the reactivated Roxy Music was to recruit a bassist from that new generation: The Vibrators' Gary Tibbs, a protégé of Herbie Flowers. Even so, there was clearly a limit to how much rude energy Ferry would tolerate – after all, his idea of a punk single had been *The Bride Stripped Bare*'s "Sign Of The Times".

Though disco was obviously a much better fit for the Roxy reboot, it wasn't a style the band embraced so readily. One factor was drummer Paul Thompson, whose role had been to anchor Roxy Music's more esoteric inclinations to big, meaty beats. Another was timing. While the success of "Love Is The Drug" in 1975 would've led them to further funkiness had they not closed up the shop after *Siren*, the band may have felt relieved to be out of contention while the rest of rock's aristocracy made craven bids for dancefloor relevancy, leaving Roxy's reputation untarnished by the existence of a "Do Ya Think I'm Sexy".

As the paramour of Jerry Hall, Ferry was no stranger to Studio 54 but his ambivalence about the scene was chillingly evident in *Manifesto*'s cover image of a discotheque filled with eerie mannequins. Still, wowed by the high-glamour synthesis of sound and image he discovered at a Roxy Music show, Chic's Nile Rodgers

CRITICS' VERDICTS

"Roxy Music... have reduced themselves, or extended themselves, to selling bittersweet fantasies and seductive happy endings, making music where the nostalgic tendencies are impossibly correct, the modern moments ironically obvious and the moods delicately (remotely) controlled."
Paul Morley, NME, 21/6/1980

TRACKMARKS

1. In The Midnight Hour ★★
2. Oh Yeah ★★★★★
3. Same Old Scene ★★★★★
4. Flesh And Blood ★★★
5. My Only Love ★★★
6. Over You ★★★★★
7. Eight Miles High ★★★★
8. Rain Rain Rain ★★★★
9. No Strange Delight ★★★★
10. Running Wild ★★★

Label: EG
Produced by: Rhett Davies and Roxy Music
Recorded at: Basing Street Studios, London, and Gallery Studio, Chertsey
Personnel: Bryan Ferry (vocals, keys, guitar, strings), Andy Mackay (sax, oboe), Phil Manzanera (gtr, bass), Paul Carrack (strings, organ, piano), Neil Hubbard (gtr), Neil Jason (bass), Andy Newmark, Allan Schwartzberg (drums), Alan Spenner, Gary Tibbs (bass), Suzanne Ciani (synths), Simon Phillips (perc)
Highest chart position: UK 1; US 35

told partner Bernie Edwards, "We've got to do the black version of this shit." In many respects, *Flesh + Blood* depicts a reciprocal process, with Roxy becoming the white version of Chic – how else to describe the blend of rubbery bassline, strutting beat and Ferry's hazy, languorous vocal on the stunning "Same Old Scene"?

Bob Clearmountain provides another link between the two sharpest-looking acts of the '70s. The young engineer at New York's Power Station had a forte for giving songs by rock and R&B artists the sheen, crispness and rhythmic regularity that disco listeners demanded – among his credits was Chic's "Le Freak," released in the fall of 1978 but ubiquitous the following year, too. Clearmountain entered the Roxy orbit when he remixed "Dance Away" and "Angel Eyes" for *Manifesto* and both became huge hits.

JUST as the arrival of Clearmountain had a great influence on the rhythmic and textural possibilities that were opening up for them, Paul Thompson's departure was similarly significant. The loss of their original drummer (prompted by a thumb injury and his differences with Ferry) completed Roxy Music's transformation from a band to Ferry, Manzanera, Mackay and a series of hired guns to be deployed at will. That led to a freer recording methodology more suited to Clearmountain's disco assignments and the approach that producer Rhett Davies developed on Brian Eno's albums. Instead of cutting songs with a band in the studio, it was more about building the groove by synthetic means and then getting the musicians to play to what they heard, with the result becoming ever more layered.

Ferry took the tactic to extremes on his solo albums – by the time

SONGS LIKE "RAIN RAIN RAIN" HAVE A SPACIOUS QUALITY THAT WOULD DISAPPEAR AS FERRY'S MUSIC GREW DENSER

of *Bête Noire*, even 56 tracks hardly seemed adequate. It's not so oppressive here. Instead, songs like "My Only Love" and "Rain Rain Rain" have a spacious quality that would disappear as Ferry's music grew ever denser. Likewise, there's altogether less smothering of details as fine as Manzanera's high, crystalline guitar line in "Oh Yeah" and the climatic intersection between Mackay's soaring sax and the cascade of synths in "Over You."

That said, the sumptuousness that results from the new production aesthetic can't entirely compensate for the paucity of inspiration in *Flesh + Blood*'s weakest songs. The title track is fatally lugubrious, even if bands like Japan would soon find new uses for its synth-funk sound and air of Euro decadence. And the many Roxy Music doubters could be forgiven for hastily writing off the album given that it opens with the stodgiest version of Wilson Pickett's "In The Midnight Hour" ever recorded.

One such doubter was *Rolling Stone*'s Ken Tucker, who dismissed *Flesh + Blood* as an "art-rock disco album". He meant the phrase as a withering putdown but it may now seem like an exhilarating proposition to listeners no longer immersed in the era's false dichotomies. It's also easier to hear the affinity between the Roxy of *Flesh + Blood* and the previously scornful youngsters who were swiftly heading toward their own visions of art-rock disco, a strain that reached its commercial apex with Duran Duran's *Rio*. Of course, Roxy Music would soon reach a mistier sort of summit.

AVALON

RELEASED: MAY 28, 1982

Roxy find a new way forward in a highly evolved sophistication. Onwards, finally, into Arthurian mists.

BY MICHAEL BONNER

THERE is a scene in Sofia Coppola's film *Lost In Translation* where Bob Harris – an actor whose career is winding down, played by Bill Murray – and Charlotte, a photographer's young wife (Scarlett Johansson), visit a Tokyo karaoke bar. There, the middle-aged actor serenades his young companion with "More Than This" – a song about a solitary soul asking questions in a noisy world. In many ways, it is possible to see Harris as analogous to Ferry's narrator on not just "More Than This" but all the songs that feature on *Avalon* – Roxy Music's eighth and, so far, final studio album. Just as Harris, adrift in Tokyo luxury, finds an unlikely soulmate in Charlotte, so the protagonists on *Avalon* are stirred from midlife ennui, glimpsing fleeting, illusory hope across a crowded room.

Ferry was 37 when Roxy Music recorded *Avalon*; but he sounds much older. This is perhaps partly evidence of Ferry's own weariness after having reshaped Roxy as a vehicle for his own ideas and interests; a process begun in earnest after the band reformed for 1979's *Manifesto*. Perhaps it's the drugs – there was talk of cocaine addiction around this time. But Ferry's weariness is partly affectation, too. As it transpired, "Avalon" summarised a position that went on to define Ferry's solo career: "*Now the party's over, I'm so tired*." Subsequently, he fell into the persona of the perpetually unstretched roué, jaded by all the models, the canapés and the high-end Savile Row tailoring. One more spin round the dancefloor? Oh, must we?

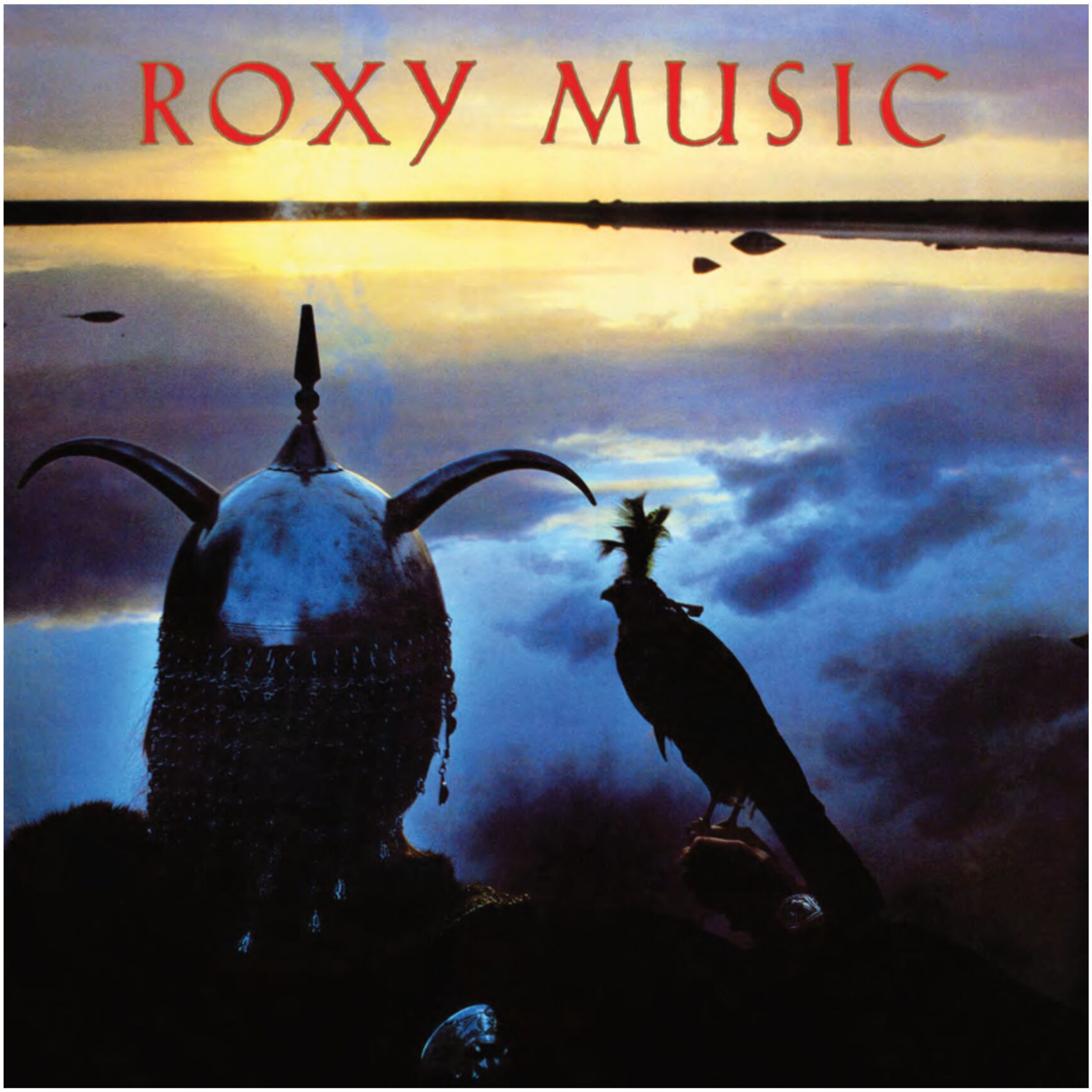
Ferry began writing songs while on the west coast of Ireland – "I like to think some of the dark melancholy of the album comes from that place," Ferry told *The Mail On Sunday* in 2009. But such is the international level Roxy were operating at during 1981 that *Avalon* was recorded in three separate locations: Phil Manzanera's Gallery Studio in Chertsey, Compass Point Studios in Nassau and finally the Power Station in New York. The work began with musical ideas and grooves – for a band without a drummer, a Linn drum machine became critical to the creative process. At some point while in Ireland, Ferry hit upon the legend of King Arthur, with its noble knights, courtly intrigue and a utopian paradise lost in the mists of time. In an *NME* interview in June 1982, Ferry described Avalon – the enchanted island, that is – as "the ultimate romantic fairytale place". Certainly, it proved a very different but no less compelling fantasy than the one Ferry had proposed at the other end of Roxy's career. But the Dadaist dandy of early Roxy had long gone; here Ferry cast himself as Arthur and his aristocratic partner Lucy Helmore – who posed as the cover model for *Avalon* with her back to the camera – as his Guinevere. The title implies a concept album, though evidently it isn't one. "Yes it does, but there you are," Ferry admitted to *NME*'s Kristine McKenna. "I've often thought I should do an album where the songs are all bound together in the style of *West Side Story*, but it's always seemed like too much bother to work that way. So instead I have these 10 poems or short stories that could, with a bit more work, be fashioned into a novel."

What emerged in May 1982 was an album of minimalist, elegant design; full of hushed dramas rather than bold statements. The

CRITICS' VERDICTS

"Everything about *Avalon* has been precision-honed and upholstered with velvet specifically to seek out those most-intimate little places well inside your own Total Exclusion Zone." Adam Sweeting, MM, 29/5/1982

"Overall, its approach is soft, a little mournful, consistently mellow without blandness." Paul Du Noyer, NME, 29/5/1982



TRACKMARKS

1. More Than This ★★★★★
2. The Space Between ★★★★
3. Avalon ★★★★★
4. India ★★★
5. While My Heart Is Still Beating ★★★★
6. The Main Thing ★★★
7. Take A Chance On Me ★★★★
8. To Turn You On ★★★
9. True To Life ★★★★
10. Tara ★★★

Label: EG Records
Produced by: Rhett Davies and Roxy Music
Recorded at: Compass Point, Nassau; the Power Station, New York
Personnel: Bryan Ferry (vocals, keyboards, guitar synthesiser), Andy Mackay (saxophones), Phil Manzanera (lead guitar), Neil Hubbard (guitars), Andy Newmark (drums), Alan Spenner (bass), Fonzi Thornton (vocals)
Highest chart position: UK 1; US 53

distinctive character that Phil Manzanera and Andy Mackay brought to earlier albums had become quiescent; the work they do here is impressionistic and discreet. There are delicate vibes and gentle tones from the outset: the cascading guitar intro to "More Than This" is as demonstrative as it gets. Ferry's world-weariness, meanwhile, recalls a previous generation of crooners. You could imagine Sinatra singing "More Than This" or "Avalon", another tuxedoed Casanova probing the emptiness and longing beneath the shiny surface. "The Space Between" is driven by a sinuous, propulsive groove punctuated by Ferry's barely-there vocals, occasional flurries of guitar and Mackay's reggae-lite horns. "Avalon" itself is borne along on Ferry's own shimmering synth lines and Manzanera's discreet noodling; the pulse quickens with the arrival of Haitian singer Yanick Étienne, who provides a soaring, heart-stopping finale.

Ferry always found writing lyrics difficult – he got round that on *Flesh + Blood* by including two covers, while *Avalon* features two instrumentals, "India" and "Tara" (named after a ritual site of Ireland's ancient high kings). The languid pace of "While My Heart Is Still Beating" belies its more exploratory qualities – skittering Linn drum patterns, stark piano melodies, backmasked guitar solos. This kind of airtight experimentation underscores that this is a work of studio craftsmen; as with much of *Avalon*, you suspect this was hothoused in a control room, with Ferry and producer Rhett Davies adding sounds and texture as they went. "We were creating tracks back then," the producer claimed. "We didn't have the songs. The songs were virtually the last things to go on there."

THE AUSTERE, BEAUTIFUL SONGS OFFERED A SHARP CONTRAST TO THE YEAR'S OTHER BIG RELEASES

SIMILARLY, it is possible to distinguish multiple elements layered into the intro to "The Main Thing" – drum machines, fretless bass, percussion, keyboard pulses – before its lithe robo-funk rhythms kick in. The first minute of "Take A Chance On Me" further amplifies the subtlety of Ferry and Davies' studio work. After that, the song shifts into a sprightly, sophisticated jangle – a far better stab at The Byrds than the cover of "Eight Miles High" on *Flesh + Blood*.

Heavy-lidded ballad "To Turn You On" is a crystallisation of all of Ferry's doomed romantic fantasies, but "True To Life" may be the musical blueprint for his ongoing solo career. Musically, you can hear "Slave To Love" in its minor-chord melancholia and samba beat. As the closer "Tara" drifts away on the sound of breaking waves, so Roxy themselves recede into the Avalonian mists.

In its way, *Avalon* was just as ambitious as the records the band made at the very start of their career. While the abrasive musical insurgency of their debut might not be present, the austere, beautiful songs on *Avalon* offered a sharp contrast to the year's other big releases: the brash New Romanticism of Duran Duran's *Rio* (for which they had surely provided some inspiration) or the hyper-pop of Michael Jackson's *Thriller*.

Many of *Avalon*'s session players returned for *Boys And Girls* three years later, providing a natural bridge between Roxy Music's end and Ferry's solo career, which continued uninterrupted until Roxy's reunion in 2001. Indeed, *Avalon* is the late-career high-water mark against which all of Ferry's subsequent albums are to be judged. ✪

ARCHIVE 1982

"Are you enjoying yourselves?"

Sadly, ALLAN JONES is not. Whether it's the corporate sponsorship or the decadent playing, a junket to a French concert proves to embody the disparity between Roxy in the 1970s and Roxy in the 1980s…

TAKEN FROM
MELODY MAKER
11/09/1982

SOMEWHERE over the drooling southern coastline of France, the chartered Monarch Airlines jet flew into a rather unsporting elbow of turbulence. There were no serious casualties, though a spot of champagne was spilled from my glass, sprinkling my knees with damp little bubbles.

To have complained would have lacked grace, I thought: Levi's had been charming enough to invite me aboard their ariel charabanc outing to see Roxy Music on the Riviera and one doesn't like to cause a nuisance of oneself over such a trivial mishap as spilled champagne; besides, the slinky young stewardess was immediately at my side, refilling my glass before the spots had dried. Chivalry should always be maintained in the face of such consummate courtesy.

Quite why Levi's were jetting out a curiously mixed sack of journalists, wholesalers, salespeople and company reps to witness Roxy Music play a concert at an old Roman amphitheatre in Fréjus takes a little explaining.

Quickly told, it involves Levi's sponsoring the British, Scandinavian and Irish stretches of Roxy's current European tour.

Crudely put, this involves Levi's bucking up Roxy's touring budget, off-setting a few costs and generally making it a tad more viable for the group to haul themselves, their entourage and multiple accessories around the continent.

Roxy reply to this apparently generous investment by plastering references to Levi's with discreet abandon on every available space: a Levi's symbol on stage, a Levi's symbol on the official souvenir programme, Levi's symbols on promotional and advertising material throughout what Levi's grandly describe as The Sponsored Territories.

Such are the economic realities confronting our honest, hard-working rock bands in these desperate recession-blistered times.

Anyway, to celebrate this momentous commercial alliance, Levi's arranged this trip to the sun-blessed shores of the South Of France. No expense would be spared, we were promised: there would be a comfortable charter flight from Luton to Nice; drinks would flow, trinkets would be dispersed to keep the party amused and diverted during the two-hour flight.

At Nice, we would be bundled aboard a fleet of luxury Air Azure coaches and whisked away to Fréjus where we would cop the concert from the comfort of specially reserved seats.

The Riviera stars would twinkle down from the Riviera sky: Roxy Music would doubtless be wonderful.

After the show, we would be whisked again by luxury coach to the Marina Baie Des Anges and an all-night party at Le Galion Restaurant; wine would flow, food would be served with unstinting zeal; Roxy Music had even promised to join us for a bev and a nosh.

It all seemed damned attractive, if rather indulgent. Where better, after all, to personally observe Roxy Music attempt to grow old gracefully than the Riviera; the traditional playground of playboys and poseurs, the vague paradise where the rich, the famous and the obsolete retire to drag out their days in fading splendour.

Yes: it seemed a perfectly authentic location for Bryan Ferry's old romantics…

PERHAPS the first indication that nothing on this trip would proceed conveniently to the detailed plan outlined above was that bank of

PETER STILL/REDFERNS

Live at Wembley Arena during the *Avalon* tour, September 22, 1982

Now, they're just another rock band

unsettling turbulence and the petulant sound system on the plane which started chewing up a tape of "Avalon" before we'd reached the end of the runway at Luton.

Everything would get much worse by the time the party reached Fréjus, however.

From a distance, the setting looked suitably glamorous: spotlights and bonfires illuminated the night sky, the ancient walls of the amphitheatre stood imperiously, impressively silhouetted against the darkness; 13,000 people were already packed within the old Roman walls.

Hundreds more were outside, besieging the amphitheatre with a Gallic ferocity, refusing to believe that they wouldn't be allowed in.

Frankly, the scenes outside the stadium verged on madness.

With a typical disdain for any concept of organisation, the promoters had erected a cruel maze of metal barriers around the single entrance to the amphitheatre.

Frog goon squads patrolled the perimeters of this ludicrously tangled network, batting away at the more courageous gate-crashers with an industrious, muscle-bound enthusiasm.

Trapped in the armpit of a frenzied mob of lunatic snail-gobbling collaborators, my heart sank to my socks as quickly as my temper rose to a feverish pitch.

Basically, when it comes to France, I tend toward agreement with Lee Brilleaux: God should have turned the entire country into a golf-course, with the population kept on permanent stand-by as caddies.

Frankly, the French are an absolute bloody shambles: they eat horses, gibber uncontrollably when they're excited, start wars they can't possibly win and capitulate at the earliest opportunity, hoping our plucky British boys will bail them out.

IT TOOK the best part of an hour to negotiate a safe passage into the amphitheatre. Tired, dusty and threatening violence, some of us still managed to look on the bright side as we tumbled into the black claustrophobia of the teeming arena.

Our protracted odyssey through the disorderly ranks of furiously gesticulating onion-heads at least meant that we managed to miss most of King Crimson's support set.

Not enough of it for my liking, but in such trying circumstances one must make the most of the meagrest of mercies.

And, as if Fripp and the chaps wailing away in the background wasn't enough already for a body to bear, we discovered after a tortuous troll around the seething interior of the arena that the seating arrangements had been blown.

The area allocated to Levi's had been abandoned by the characteristically efficient promoters and handed over to the rabble.

I was shocked, let me tell you: somebody's head should've been on the guillotine block for this tawdry outrage.

Hustling the organisers (uh!) into a hasty compromise, the Levi's representatives finally managed to secure places for their party on a kind of shelf behind the stage.

There were two drawbacks to this improvised change of plan.

The first involved the distinct possibility of premature cremation when the fireworks with which Roxy intended to climax their set would be set off immediately behind and above the area into which we were being conducted.

The second involved the polythene fan that Roxy were about to erect as a backdrop, thus rendering their performance largely invisible to anyone witless enough to plant themselves in the newly allocated backstage disadvantage point. Grimly adopting my man-of-the people profile, I elected to abandon the backstage shelf and wrestle my way back into the heaving crowd of garlic-tongued rowdies.

Teeth clenched, eyebrows knotted and blood pressure threatening to boil the lid off my head, I was still carving a belligerent little swathe through the mass of bodies around the front of the stage when the lights went out and Roxy Music limped onto the stand.

The band weighed into a lumbering overture, winding up the locals for Ferry's entrance.

And then there was the old crooner, wandering out of the wings with a kind of sideways tumble, rather like a tuxedoed crab.

Decked out in a white tux, dress shirt, cummerbund, baggy dark strides, a bow-tie loosely wound around his throat, a flap of hair falling over one eye, Ferry looked a picture of dreary rather than weary elegance.

Long gone, it seems, are the days when Ferry cut a cool shape and defined an exciting fashionable thrust. These days, he seems oddly grubby: the tux and bow-tie number is a poor throwback to '74; now it seems merely shabby, not at all exotic. Waving at the crowd with the spurious enthusiasm of a holiday camp entertainments officer, Ferry looked decidedly seedy, almost ghoulish.

PREOCCUPIED with the sheer tattiness of Ferry's current image, I spent most of the concert wondering furiously just who or what he reminded me of: the realisation came late, and stayed.

Ferry looked exactly like one of those vague celebrities employed to kiss arse as upmarket doormen at exclusive London nightclubs who end up selling dubiously titillating memoirs to the *News Of The World*.

To be precise, Ferry reminded me of boring old society crone Dai Llewellyn.

ROB VERHORST/REDFERNS

Roxy perform "Avalon" on the *Top Pop* TV show, Hilversum, Netherlands, June 14, 1982

Roxy live in London, 1982

Trying with a desperate lack of success to push this unpleasant notion to some shadowy mental recess, I tried to concentrate on the music.

By this time, the band was canoodling with a musical outline that may once have resembled the dynamic dip of "Out Of The Blue".

Currently an 11-piece, this edition of Roxy is clumsily unwieldy. The trio of black back-up singers are merely decorative; their voices deployed with no great panache, they tend to be intrusive, a shrill counterpoint to Ferry's increasingly blurred croon. Dragged down by Andy Newmark's alarmingly sluggish drumming (dull timekeeping replacing fleet encouragement), Roxy sounded unsettlingly bullish.

The kind of urgent rush needed to bring to life "Both Ends Burning" was ignored in favour of a sluggish heave; the kind of grumbling momentum that would bring any song to its knees with a disconsolate groan.

Roxy Music were once the most cavalier force in rock'n'roll, a source of disruptive energy, an unpredictable spearhead, an inquisitive, mobile hit-squad who refused to accept convention or surrender to popular expectation.

Now, clearly, they're just another rock band, trotting around the globe, cranking out their most popular tunes with all the enthusiasm of the Pope accepting an invitation to a bar mitzvah.

Surely, this isn't how Ferry would like them to be remembered?

Still, the chaps these days are coining it in and when the till's ringing, pride in your craft and original vision isn't too uncomfortable a lump to swallow.

The rock business always provides the most tellingly absurd ironies, and so Roxy Music and Ferry find themselves selling more records during their creative decline than ever they did when they were absolutely sizzling with wit, invention and musical intrigue.

See, fortunately for Ferry, Roxy's creative demise and the increasingly bland mood of their recent music has coincided brilliantly with the current vogue for music that has as much shape and emotional depth as a wet sock.

Once talked about by people with ears in the same breath as true rock'n'roll innovators like The Velvet Underground and Can, Roxy's music these days most closely resembles the empty glitter of pompous little cretins like ABC and Simple Minds.

"Avalon", especially, found Roxy Music slipping into a cultured vacuum which is recreated in concert as a glossy charade, the group's former flamboyant kinetic energy replaced by a dour professionalism.

Roxy Music were once the most cavalier force in rock'n'roll

While Ferry was hamming it up with a disconcertingly facile line in rock star banter, Manzanera was busily abandoning all pretence to his former individuality with a series of woefully misconceived guitar hero mutations, including a lengthy solo feature that had this reporter hurrying for the bunker.

Andy Mackay, meanwhile, looked alert only when his skinny contributions were misguidedly rewarded with applause.

"Are you enjoying yourselves?" Ferry yelled coarsely at one point. This should've provoked an earnest debate; instead the Frogs bellowed a questionable affirmation.

"This was written for you," Ferry insisted, introducing a pedantic, lumbering version of the once-majestic "Song For Europe".

I WENT in search of a drink only to find that I'd forgotten to exchange my hard-earned sterling for foreign grindles. Desperate and dry, I stumbled back into the arena, shovelling locals out of the way as I went, only to find Roxy trying desperately to come to terms with a hamfisted version of Neil Young's "Like A Hurricane"; a choice of song spectacularly unsuited to both Ferry's increasingly starved vocal range and Roxy's current inability to invest virtually any song with a credible momentum.

Transparently conforming to the conventions they once usurped with such glorious relish, Roxy reserved the hits for the home-run... "Dance Away", "Love Is The Drug" leading into a laborious lunge at "Editions Of You", with Ferry and Mackay tapping out the same choreographed routines they've been using since 1973.

Returning for a first encore with "Do The Strand", Roxy were simply overshadowed by their own firework display, though it wasn't difficult to imagine them being once disdainful of such grotesque rock theatre.

Almost salvaging something from the wreckage of this performance, Ferry hauled out "Jealous Guy", embellished it with his most sincere vocal performance of the evening and was rewarded for his efforts by Manzanera, who turned in a delightfully lyrical guitar solo. It was all too little, too late, I'm afraid: Roxy just don't mean that much anymore. They're just another flippant irrelevancy. Their true glory is confined to another time, another place.

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

ENO 1980s

RELEASED: 1982-1985

From ghostly African plains to The Joshua Tree, via the Cornish coastline and the Sea Of Tranquility – Eno's exotic '80s trip.

BY LOUIS PATTISON

THROUGHOUT the late 1970s, Brian Eno was a creative nomad, roaming the world in search of fresh scenes and sounds. The holy contemplation of the New Age movement, the scratchy art abstraction of New York's no-wave scene, the deracinated capitalist architecture of the international airport – all had offered fuel for Eno's voracious creativity. *My Life In The Bush Of Ghosts*, his 1981 collaboration with David Byrne, was the pinnacle of this magpie approach. Perhaps the first truly postmodern album, *...Bush Of Ghosts* brought to life Eno's "vision of a psychedelic Africa", a funky worldbeat dotted with exotic samples – Lebanese mountain singers, American televangelists, Algerian Muslims reciting The Quran. In Eno's hands, music's borders collapsed, and everything flowed together.

With *Ambient 4: On Land*, Eno came home. His first solo album of the '80s turned its back on the outside world, instead seeming to issue from deep within the English soil: a murkily evocative elegy to the landscape and topography of the British Isles that feels simultaneously familiar and mysterious. One day, this sort of droning, abstract music would have an entire genre bracket devoted to it – so-called "dark ambient". Here, though, Eno is venturing into the twilight, drawing the map as he goes.

On Land's textured, gloomy sounds often seem to imply or evoke shadowy rural environments. Saturated drones loom in like thick banks of fog, while muffled effects could be mistaken for the calls of distant wildlife, or bells chiming from the far side of a valley. In particular, "Shadow", with its wordless vocals and shimmering effects, is deeply unsettling, like an encounter with a phantom along some deserted country lane.

Elsewhere, links to place are made explicit. The murky, isolated "Lizard Point" takes its name from a rocky Cornish outcrop that forms the most southerly point of the English mainland, while "Dunwich Beach, Autumn 1960" references a spot along the Suffolk coastline, some 20 miles from the young Eno's place of birth. Once a medieval seat of power, coastal erosion means much of ancient Dunwich has since been lost to the sea. This was the beach where Jonathan Miller filmed his 1968 adaptation of MR James' *Whistle And I'll Come To You*, the greatest ghost story by one of the masters of the form. Eno's eerie, delay-soaked guitar piece seems to channel something of its desolate dread.

The moody, textured quality of *Ambient 4: On Land* would be an avenue Eno would explore throughout the 1980s – although his perspective was, again, shifting. *Apollo: Atmospheres & Soundtracks* began life as a soundtrack for a feature-length documentary by director Al Reinert, piecing together previously unseen 35mm footage of the moon landings derived from NASA's archives (after numerous edits, the film finally saw wide release in 1989 under the name *For All Mankind*, with some of Eno's score excised).

Despite this rocky birth, *Apollo...* is one of the finest examples of Eno's ambient approach. Moments like "The Secret Place" and "Signals" draw something from the minimal space music practised by cosmic-minded groups like Tangerine Dream. But the presence of a young Canadian guitarist and producer, Daniel Lanois, and Eno's younger brother Roger – a classically trained pianist, here making his recording debut – often drag *Apollo...* into more overtly musical territory. In conversation with Reinert, Eno had learned the tantalising fact that the Apollo astronauts were each allowed to take one cassette into space, and all but one took country music. Tracks like "Silver Morning" and "Deep Blue Day", then, are Eno's attempt to envisage a sort of weightless country & western, soundtracks to long days drifting across the great plains of space, set to Lanois' dreamy pedal steel.

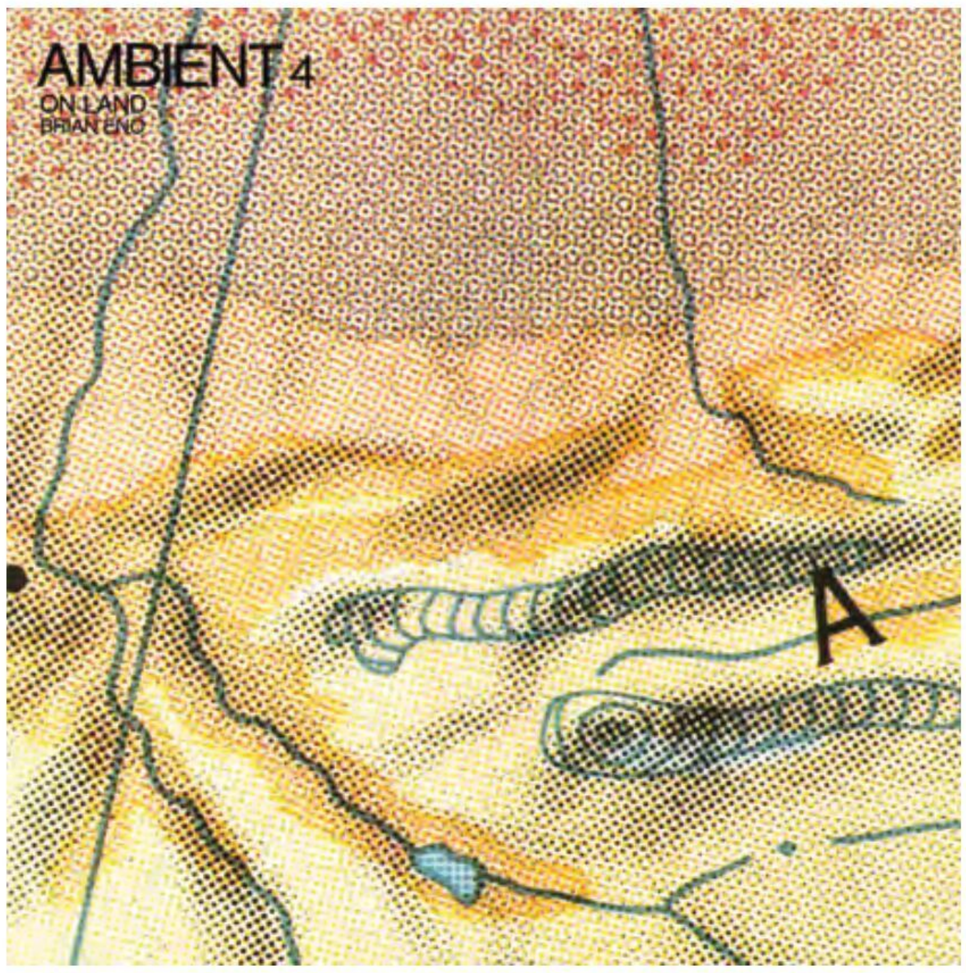
CRITICS' VERDICTS

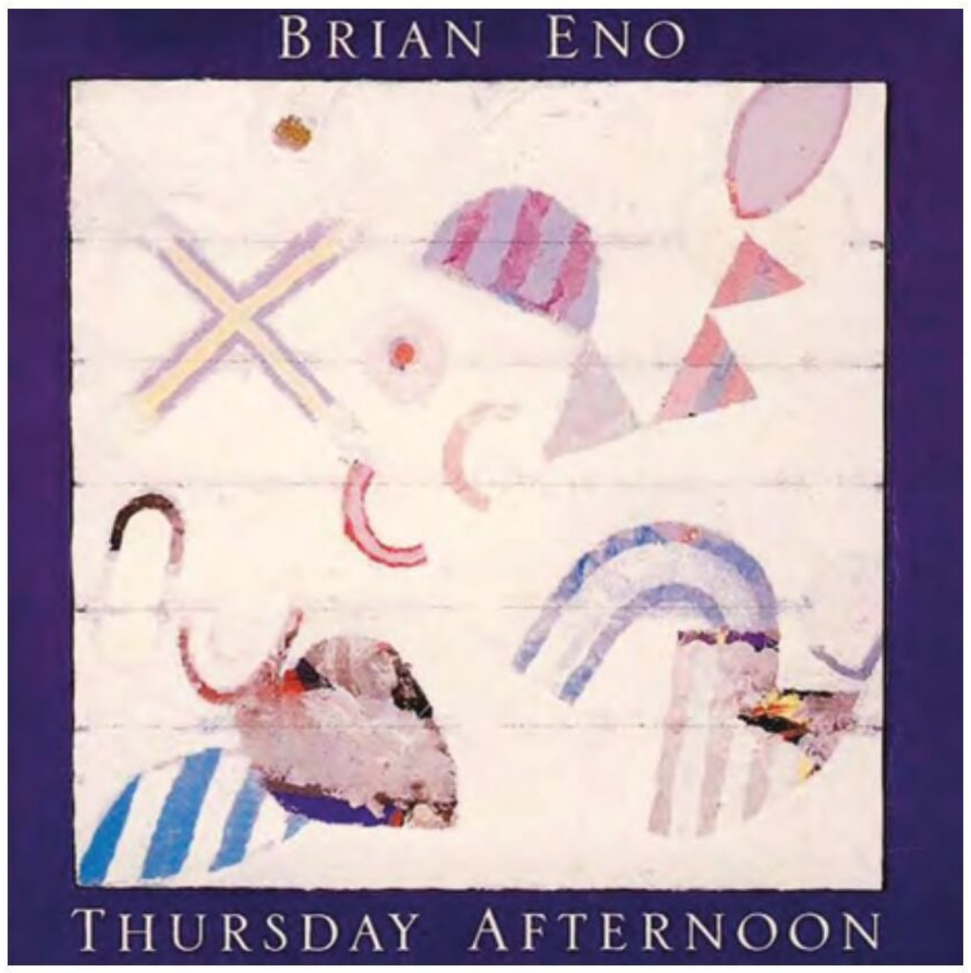
ON LAND

"These are the most interesting ideas Eno's had for a long time and the fruits of them are tiny masterpieces of mood music, one of the avant-garde's best records since Steve Reich's *Music For 18 Musicians*." Tom Baker, NME, 24/4/1982

APOLLO: ATMOSPHERES & SOUNDTRACKS

"Really, it's the sort of thing one might expect from Vangelis or Tomita, and certainly no better." Chris Bohn, NME, 30/7/1983





TRACKMARKS

AMBIENT 4: ON LAND ★★★★
Label: EG
Released: 1982
Produced by: Brian Eno
Recorded at: Various locations
Personnel: Brian Eno, Michael Beinhorn, Jon Hassell, Daniel Lanois
Highest chart position: UK –; US –

APOLLO: ATMOSPHERES & SOUNDTRACKS ★★★★
Label: EG
Released: 1983
Produced by: Brian Eno; Daniel Lanois
Recorded at: Grant Avenue Studio, Hamilton, Ontario
Personnel: Brian Eno, Daniel Lanois, Roger Eno
Highest chart position: UK –; US –

MUSIC FOR FILMS 2 ★★★★
Label: EG
Released: 1983
Produced by: Brian Eno; Daniel Lanois
Recorded at: Various locations
Personnel: Brian Eno, Daniel Lanois, Roger Eno
Highest chart position: UK –; US –

THURSDAY AFTERNOON ★★★★
Label: EG
Released: 1985
Produced by: Brian Eno, Daniel Lanois, Roger Eno
Recorded at: Various locations
Personnel: Brian Eno, Daniel Lanois, Roger Eno
Highest chart position: UK –; US –

Lanois would rapidly become one of Eno's most trusted collaborators, to the extent that Eno decided to relocate to Hamilton, a small city in Ontario where the producer had built a studio in a small redbrick Edwardian house. The pair's partnership continued to yield compelling work. *Music For Films Volume 2* collects some of the material from *Apollo...*, with fresh collaborative work created with Lanois and Roger Eno, and while not quite essential, its highlights – mournful keyboard miniature "Roman Twilight", the gleaming and gorgeous "Always Returning (II)" – are well worth hearing.

If this subtle music suggested a drift into obscurity, of course history shows the opposite is true. Shortly after *Music For Films Volume 2*, an unexpected phone call from Bono saw Eno and Lanois recruited as producers for the next U2 album, *The Unforgettable Fire*, the widescreen sound of which propelled the band to new levels of popularity, and the partnership would endure through several U2 albums to come, notably 1987's *The Joshua Tree* and 1991's *Achtung Baby*.

EVEN as Eno was reshaping the landscape of mainstream rock, he maintained his commitment to ambient music. Made with assistance from Lanois, Roger Eno and Michael Brook, *Thursday Afternoon* began life as a soundtrack to a selection of Eno's "video paintings", in which slow, impressionistic visuals of a female nude – Eno's friend, the artist and photographer Christine Alicino – are treated with a variety of gently warping visual effects. The work found Eno applying his ambient philosophy to the video medium. "Our background as television viewers has conditioned us to expect that things on screens change dramatically and in significant temporal sequence, and has therefore reinforced a rigid relationship between viewer and screen – you sit still and it moves," he explained in the liner notes. Instead, *Thursday Afternoon* turns this relationship on its head. As Eno put it: "It sits still and you move."

> ON LAND'S TEXTURED, GLOOMY SOUNDS OFTEN SEEM TO IMPLY OR EVOKE SHADOWY RURAL ENVIRONMENTS

The soundtrack to *Thursday Afternoon* was released in 1985 on compact disc – a relatively new format, and the only one that could contain its 61-minute running time. Mind you, as one of Eno's "holographic works" – his term for when a brief section of the music is representative of the whole piece – it could have run longer, or equally shorter; time has little bearing here.

Often, *Thursday Afternoon* is barely there. It drifts in like a fine and iridescent mist, piano notes falling like water droplets, sometimes forming tantalising chords, before dissipating. It goes nowhere; its spirit is clear and benign. But it might be the most successful example of Eno's ambient music maxim: it's as ignorable as it is interesting.

THE SOLO ALBUMS

BRYAN FERRY 1980s/1990s

RELEASED: 1985-1999

Chart rockets, stalled classics, buried hatchets – the agonies and ecstasies of life after Roxy. **BY BUD SCOPPA**

AVALON was a triumphant swansong for Roxy Music and, as he resumed his solo career, the enchanted world Bryan Ferry conjured begged a return visit. He'd have his pick of players to accompany him on his next expedition – who wouldn't want to work on a project with the Cary Grant of art rock? Ferry's Anglo-American all-star cast included guitarists Mark Knopfler, David Gilmour, Nile Rodgers and Neil Hubbard; bassists Tony Levin and Marcus Miller; Dire Straits keyboardist Guy Fletcher and alto sax man David Sanborn, who'd played on Bowie's *Young Americans* and Steely Dan's *Gaucho*; plus *Avalon* drummer Andy Newmark and percussionist Jimmy Maelen.

Though the players were different, the sounds they made are beguilingly familiar throughout Ferry's sixth solo LP, 1985's playfully titled *Boys And Girls*. It's dramatically apparent that the record is of a piece with *Avalon* from its first few moments – the orchestral rustlings and clipped guitar licks that introduce "Sensation", which functions similarly to "The Main Thing". The beguiling, hyper-romantic "Slave To Love", by design the album's "More Than This", glides into the undulating "Don't Stop The Dance", an artfully lit ballroom scene set off by the emotional tug of an overhanging guitar, and by this point we're deep into a recurring dream. Ferry and his musical courtiers maintain the spell for the full 38 minutes, most immersively on the scintillating deep cuts "Windswept" and "Valentine".

Boys And Girls became Ferry's one and only UK chart-topper, and the fact he'd pulled off the feat with a different cast further validated his auteur status. But the spectre of *Avalon* would continue to haunt him as he pondered his next move, knowing that anything that fell short of his career landmark – and now its companion work – would be judged a failure, whether he attempted to make another LP in its likeness or tried something new. As it turned out, he opted to combine the two vectors.

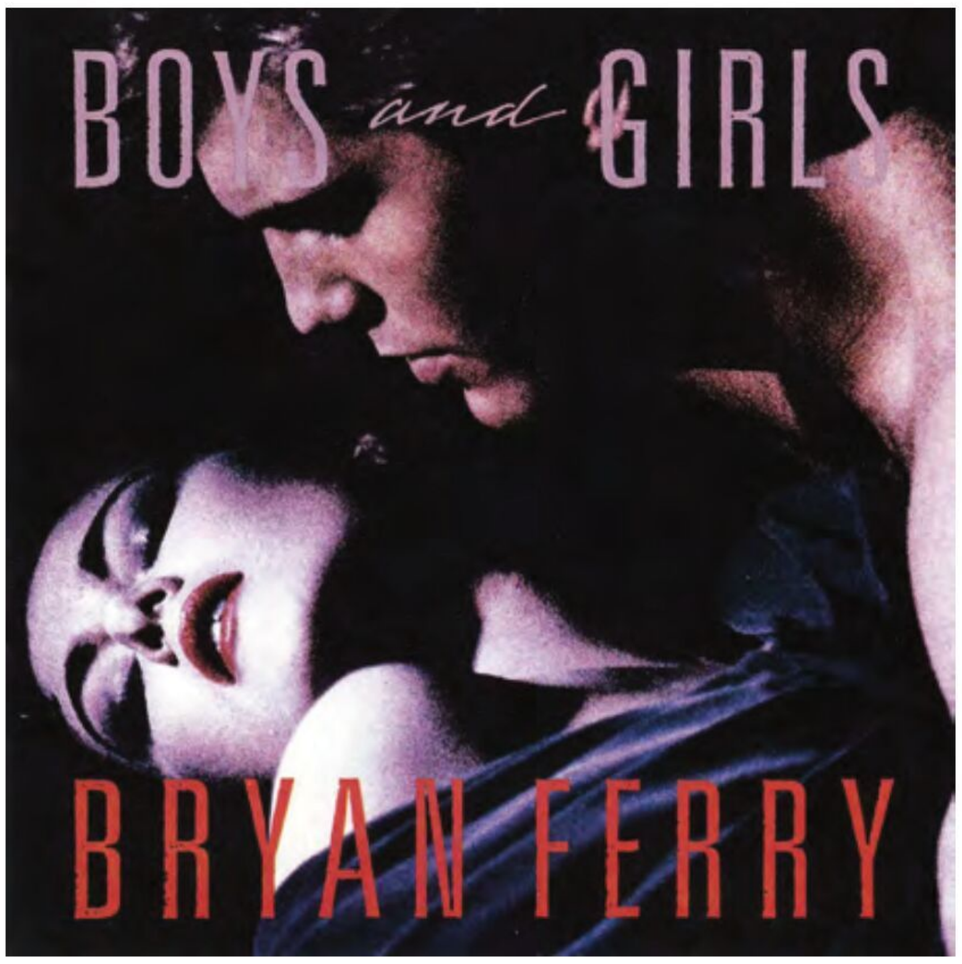
During the year-long process that resulted in 1987's *Bête Noire*, Ferry split time between a studio in the South Of France, Compass Point in Nassau and LA for a four-month writing sojourn, working with writer/producer Patrick Leonard, who was then in the midst of a long-running collaboration with Madonna (how's that for mixing things up?) and The Smiths' revered Johnny Marr – before resuming recording in Paris. The album title (English synonym: anathema) may be ironic, but it inadvertently points to a major sonic issue. The gated reverb on the drums – which undercuts the enjoyment of so many '80s records – doesn't do the manicured arrangements any favours; the harshly exaggerated groove of "Limbo" is a recurring issue on the Leonard co-produced tracks, confirming that what works for a pop siren doesn't naturally lend itself to the carefully curated cosmology of a 42-year-old. The four tracks Ferry worked on with guitarist Chester Kamen, including the sensual groove-fest "Kiss And Tell" and the regal, swaggering Marr co-write "The Right Stuff", are more alluring, though the sheer mass of the backing chorale gives off the odour of florid decay. Confined by the cross-purposes of its direction, *Bête Noire* would be Ferry's first stumble. And the trouble was just starting.

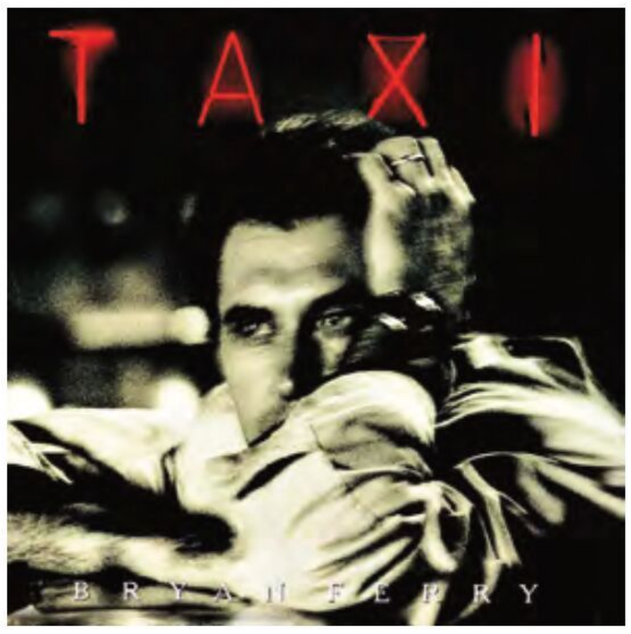
His follow-up bore the working title 'Horoscope'. Technological advances had multiplied the number of available tracks from 24

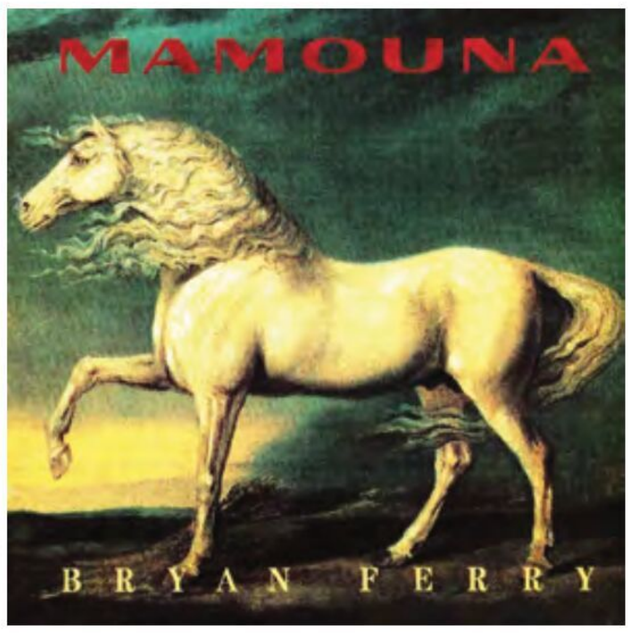
CRITICS' VERDICTS

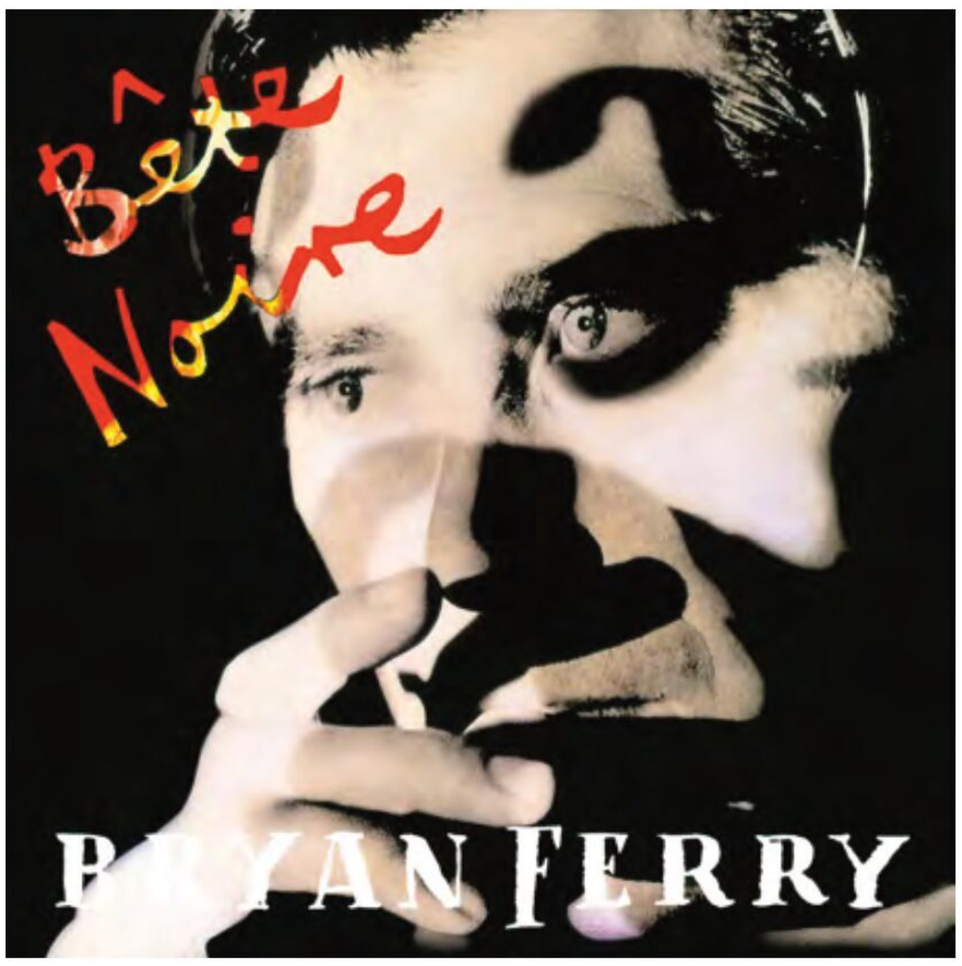
BOYS AND GIRLS
"*Boys And Girls* is the final refining away of the vulgarity of camp that still affected *The Bride*... The music is all one sad shimmer."
Richard Cook, NME, 8/6/1985

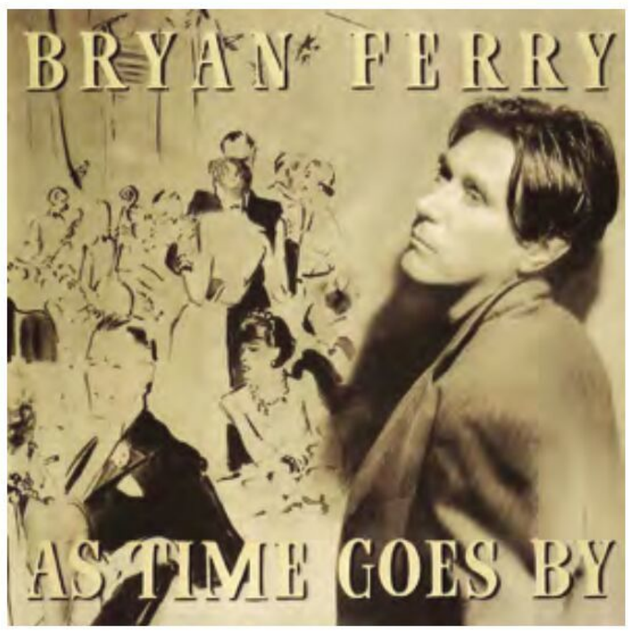
AS TIME GOES BY
"Gone are the customised tonal Ferryisms and obscure melodic paraphrasing, to be replaced by a compelling if curiously anonymous middle-aged croon."
Kit Aiken, Uncut, November 1999











TRACKMARKS

BOYS AND GIRLS
★★★★★
Label: EG
Released: June 1985
Produced by: Bryan Ferry, Rhett Davies
Recorded at: Compass Point, Bahamas; AIR and Sarm West, London; Effanel Music, RPM and The Power Station, New York; The White House, New South Wales
Highest chart position: UK 1; US 63

BETE NOIRE
★★★★
Label: Virgin
Released: November 2, 1987
Produced by: Bryan Ferry, Chester Kamen, Patrick Leonard
Recorded at: Compass Point, Nassau; Marcadet, Mireval Var and Guillaume Tell, Paris
Highest chart position: UK 9; US 63

TAXI
★★★
Label: Virgin
Released: April 13, 1993
Produced by: Bryan Ferry, Robin Trower
Recorded at: Matrix Studios, London
Highest chart position: UK 2; US 79

MAMOUNA
★★★
Label: Virgin
Released: September 5, 1994
Produced by: Bryan Ferry, Robin Trower
Recorded at: Utopia, Olympic and Master Rock, London
Highest chart position: UK 11; US 94

AS TIME GOES BY
★★★★
Label: Virgin
Released: October 25, 1999
Produced by: Rhett Davies
Recorded at: Lansdowne, London
Highest chart position: UK 16; US 195

to 48, and that, combined with a prolonged writer's block, presented him with an enormous blank page to fill. He toiled over the project for three frustrating years, at enormous expense; he was paying the costs of the studio and the musicians himself after blowing through the album advance. And when Ferry finally delivered the eight-song 'Horoscope' to Virgin in 1992, the label found it wanting. "It didn't really have anything that was radio-friendly enough," Ferry told *The Independent*'s Tim de Lisle.

Ferry's wife Lucy suggested cover versions might be a fix. The job needed to be done quickly, and Ferry called on guitarist Robin Trower, who'd transitioned from Procol Harum to a successful solo career, to co-produce: they made a list of candidates, picked a couple and cut them at a 24-track studio in London, using a relatively small crew of musicians. The sessions went so well that they kept going – "and finally I decided to make an album, and give myself a break from the other one", he explained.

The result was *Taxi*, on which he slowed down and darkened a batch of mostly upbeat '50s and '60s hits, from "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow" to "Just One Look". Ferry at long last had a new LP in release, and the process of making it had recharged him as he shifted his focus back to 'Horoscope', with Trower still along for the ride. Ferry also buried the hatchet with Eno, and he asked his former bandmate to join the project in order to play the role of "an agent provocateur and... editor of ideas". With Phil Manzanera and Andy Mackay also back on board, the revitalised project was starting to look like an unofficial Roxy reunion.

FERRY HAD RELEASED A MERE 27 ORIGINAL SONGS DURING A DECADE AND A HALF

THE album, retitled *Mamouna* shortly before its release in 1995, lifting the astrological curse, largely eschewed the dance grooves of *Bête Noire* in favour of a more elegant, understated presentation rich in mood and atmosphere, suggesting that Eno – credited with "sonic" contributions on eight of the 10 tracks – had played his role effectively. "Don't Want To Know", "Which Way To Turn", "Chain Reaction" and the title track unfold with silky grace; the Eno co-write "Wildcat Days" rumbles with guitar lightning and synth thunder; and the strutting, shadowy "The 39 Steps" turns on the line, *"Where do we go from here?"* which could be viewed as a reference to the beginning of his five-year musical odyssey. By its end, Ferry was back in familiar waters, dropping anchor at Avalon Harbour, as if it were his destiny.

Following a series of collaborations that failed to bear fruit by his exacting standards, the 54-year-old Ferry closed out the decade and the century with another covers album. Perhaps feeling nostalgic as Y2K loomed, he chose to deliver a collection of earnestly crooned Tin Pan Alley standards from the '30s, complete with faithfully rendered period arrangements featuring cocktail piano, brushed snares, clarinets and muted trumpets. He titled the album *As Time Goes By*, but he could've called it 'A Little Touch Of Vibrato In The Noire'.

When all was said and done, Ferry had released a mere 27 original songs, plus one interlude, during a decade and a half of recording. Would he have been better off keeping the band together? He must have asked himself that question more than once.

ROXY MUSIC

ENO 1990s

RELEASED: 1992-1997

The ongoing Eno Project enters a scattergun phase. CD-ROM albums, juju space jazz, ambient hours, and no little loveliness.

BY JON DALE

BRIAN ENO started the 1990s in collaborative mode, working with John Cale on a wonderful pop album, *Wrong Way Up*, while also producing U2 and dallying in visual arts. As the decades had moved on, he'd embraced the possibilities afforded to the modern media polymath, though that had the curious effect of limiting, at times, the power of his own music. Formerly someone who had been focused on musical projects, now his music would be made in the gaps between other, generally more lucrative engagements. While it's to Eno's credit that often his music was as questing and enjoyable as always, he would occasionally lose the thread – as was the case with his return to pop, 1992's *Nerve Net*, which was a mutant version of the previous year's unreleased 'My Squelchy Life' (he'd withdrawn the latter's release after discovering it was going to be held back from release for almost half a year).

Nerve Net's dynamics feel fractured; it's no surprise to discover it was material recorded in the wake of the sessions for U2's *Achtung Baby*, an album marinated in postmodern irony, thanks in no small part to Eno's interventions. He coined the genre "juju space jazz" to describe the songs on the album, which is lovely and poetic, and captures some of the estrangement evoked by songs like "Ali Click" and "My Squelchy Life". And you can hear the music's basis in spontaneous improvisations and impromptu encounters, recorded when Eno had gaps in his schedule; there's a freshness to some of the playing that can only really come of these kinds of ad hoc assemblages.

CRITICS' VERDICTS

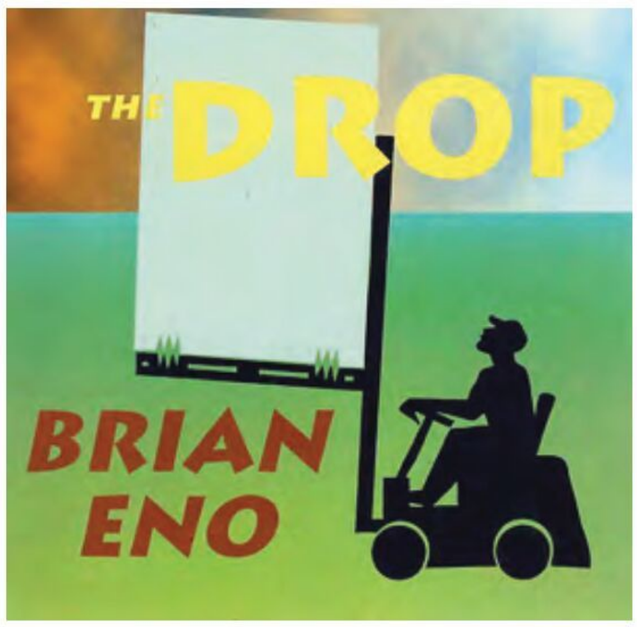
NERVE NET
"He takes you round the block and back, does Eno, with few comforting reference points, although I sense echoes of early YMO and Yello..."
Betty Page, NME, 12/9/1992

THE DROP
"In order not to draw any attention from his collaborators on other projects, he's purposefully made it utter cack in coleslaw."
Mark Beaumont, NME, 19/7/1997

But *Nerve Net* also feels a little indecisive, uncertain; there's a hamfistedness to some of the funk/jazz moves that doesn't help the album to gel, and it can feel a little bit too enamoured of itself, the melodies congealing in a puddle of DX7 synth. At its strongest, such as the opening "Fractal Zoom", there's a genuine thrill in the possibility that the music might be just about to spiral out of control, loosen from its moorings and build something truly other out of its parts; more often than not, though, *Nerve Net* feels a little too grounded. And from someone for whom melody is such a strong suit, walking away from *Nerve Net* none of Eno's melodies really stick.

It'd be too easy to argue that Eno's musical attentions had been swayed by his production duties: in the first half of the '90s, alongside his ongoing collaboration with U2, he'd also work with Canadian singer-songwriter Jane Siberry, English shoegazers Slowdive, and stadium folksters James. But Eno was also to be found on lecture tours or engaging with the possibilities of visual art and new technology. The visual art connection was particularly strong, and Eno's other album from 1992, *The Shutov Assembly*, pulled together miniatures that had accompanied installations over the past decade.

Full credit to Eno for constructing such a convincing album from these constituent parts; *The Shutov Assembly* is unrelentingly lovely, even as it courts austerity at times. Indeed, that balance between the richly emotional and the programmatic makes *The Shutov Assembly* so beguiling, with lovely pieces such as "Riverside" and "Triennale" drifting through the air like perfume (another fascination of Eno's).



TRACKMARKS

NERVE NET
★★★
Label: Warner Bros
Released: September 1, 1992
Produced by: Brian Eno
Recorded at: Ground Control Studios, Los Angeles; Westside Studios, London; Abbey Road Studios, London; Eastcote Studios, London; Sam Therapy, London; The Wilderness Studio, Woodbridge
Highest chart position: UK 70; US –

THE SHUTOV ASSEMBLY
★★★★
Label: Opal/ Warner Bros
Released: 10 November 1992
Produced by: Brian Eno
Recorded at: The Wilderness Studio, Woodbridge
Highest chart position: UK –; US –

NEROLI: (THINKING MUSIC PART IV)
★★★★
Label: All Saints
Released: August 3, 1993
Produced by: Brian Eno
Recorded at: The Wilderness Studio, Woodbridge
Highest chart position: UK –; US –

HEADCANDY (EXPANDED ALBUM)
★★★
Label: BMG
Released: 1994
Produced by: Brian Eno
Recorded at: various locations
Highest chart position: UK –; US –

THE DROP
★★★
Label: All Saints
Released: July 7, 1997
Produced by: Brian Eno
Recorded at: various locations
Highest chart position: UK 135; US –

Often, Eno will set a string of fairy-light tones in sequence, then drape them with rich, evocative fabrics, all shrouded in a mist of reverb. Originally proposed as pieces for orchestra – "What I wanted to do was make them, using my normal tricks and devices," Eno told Andy Gill, "and then present them to an orchestra and ask them to try and copy them accurately" – they're probably all the better for appearing in their original, electronic form.

The following year, Eno would release another ambient album – this time a near-hour-long piece, *Neroli*. It's one of his most beguiling ambient pieces and picks up a thread that he'd set down after 1985's *Thursday Afternoon*, using duration to tease out the possibilities of a small number of elements. *Neroli* is unrelentingly lowercase, with a darkened yet glassy tone, a simple, slowly evolving melody, and a number of different manifestations of that melody – over time, the piece revolves around itself, slipping in and out of focus, and careful listening will indeed prove that "the parts slip apart", as Eno says, "like tectonic plates".

Increasingly, Eno's solo albums were beginning to feel purely like research and development. 1994's *Headcandy*, a CD-ROM 'expanded album' featuring vaguely psychedelic, scientific films, or visual sculptures, by Chris Juul and Doug Jipson, accompanied by music from Eno, was underdeveloped in its completed form, and Eno would later say he regretted the project. The accompanying album, while also feeling a little unformed, still has its share of Eno magic – "Manila Envelope" reunites him with guitarist Robert Fripp for a spiralling, hypnotically minimalist kind of ambient-techno mantra.

ENO WILL SET A STRING OF FAIRY-LIGHT TONES IN SEQUENCE, THEN DRAPE THEM WITH RICH, EVOCATIVE FABRICS

THE next few years were filled with diverting explorations for Eno – his Passengers project with U2, Pavarotti and Howie B; his stewardship of the *Help* project for War Child; production for David Bowie and Laurie Anderson. But something seemed to change in 1996 and 1997, and Eno would enter another prodigious phase of creativity. The difference was with the scale at which he worked; a lot of his releases across 1997 to 2000 would be limited-run CDs only available via his management office, Opal (see titles like *Lightness* and *Music For White Cube*); on occasion, his new work would appear as part of art catalogues or monographs. The only album of his from this period to receive broader distribution was *The Drop*, a record described by Eno as sounding like "what would happen if you tried to explain the sound of jazz to someone who'd never heard it, who wasn't very clever, and your description wasn't very good".

It was a bit of a far-fetched (and slightly snobbish) claim to make, to be honest. But *The Drop* still has its charms. Eno works with miniatures here, predominantly, which harks back to albums like *On Land* and *Music For Films*. It doesn't always work – pieces like "Belgian Drop" feel frustratingly unformed – but when it's at its best, *The Drop* feels truly unique, like you've discovered a new shade in the colour spectrum, one that leaves you feeling a little uncertain, even as you're compelled to keep staring.

“There are sufficient quartets of sweaty blokes in jeans”

Eighteen years on, ROXY MUSIC reform. In fine condition – divorce, solo careers and a very long tour notwithstanding – the core trio convene to discuss their legacy. Also on the agenda: Bowie, nostalgia and personal style. “I don’t wear tracksuits very often, to be honest with you,” confides Bryan Ferry to CHRIS ROBERTS…

TAKEN FROM UNCUT JULY 2001

“PEOPLE apply this word ‘cool’ to me, and I’m far from it, really,” says Bryan Ferry. “I’m very hot-blooded. It’s strange. But then there’s a certain reserve to how I behave as well, so there are contrasts.”

Then he asks me what the final score was in the football last night. He’d committed to a prior engagement which meant he had to miss the climax, and using a different analogy to that which most soccer fans might select, likens this to something from Shakespeare’s *Romeo And Juliet*. “Oh Christ, what a shame. It was like: you’ve swallowed the poison, but no! Wait! Ah, too late.”

When I suggest Beckham is overrated, he muses, “Hmm, he has an aura about him, though.”

“Sometimes,” he says, imperiously running a hand through his lustrous black hair, “you find an outlet in your work, you know.”

Ferry’s enjoyment of his solo world tour last year is one contributing factor to the comeback many of us have had topping the fantasy comeback league for nearly two decades. Roxy Music – the very name has an aura about it – have reformed, and tour an undeserving planet this year, beginning with British dates through June. Original members Ferry, guitarist Phil Manzanera and saxophonist Andy Mackay will play their first live shows since 1983.

They aren’t planning new records (save a possible live album), but will remake and remodel one of the most unique and inspirational back catalogues in rock history. “It does still surprise me,” offers Manzanera. “I can see now, in retrospect, that at the time it was Bryan’s journey word-wise, lyric-wise, and our journey contextually and atmospherically. The

POLLY BORLAND/GETTY IMAGES

"Cool? Far from it. I'm very hot-blooded"

BRYAN FERRY

A Roxy Music for the new millennium: (l-r) Andy Mackay, Bryan Ferry and Phil Manzanera, London, April 22, 2001

marrying-up of those seeds created something more than you usually get in rock, which is a limited format. It's fascinating."

In an era when every indie band that shifts units with a mildly left-of-centre album is hailed as changing the face and figure of rock and pop, it's easy to undervalue the seismic shift Roxy Music caused in the '70s and '80s. Their '72 debut album is habitually hailed – along with the Velvets' – as the best first work ever. Their garish, then super-sleek, image, fronted by Ferry's languidly suave personae, enabled them to rack up a stream of intoxicating hit singles, from "Virginia Plain" to "Avalon". The albums were a yet-to-be-surpassed fusion of style and substance. Their creators see them as falling loosely into three phases.

> **"We spent so much time working on those tracks"**
> PHIL MANZANERA

Ferry suggests there was "the first phase, with Brian Eno" of *Roxy Music* and *For Your Pleasure*. Challenging, experimental, a collision of pop-art and sci-fi with an intangible whiff of nostalgia, this generally remains the critics' favourite Roxy period.

After Eno's departure, Ferry's soulful, goddess-worshipping romanticism came to the fore, through *Stranded* (magnanimously, Eno's favourite), *Country Life* and *Siren*. Swooning, grand, cinematic, this is the Roxy of choice for those who hit teen-hood in the wake of glam rock. After a break between '76 and '78, Roxy returned (like punk never happened) with the cool clear balm of *Manifesto*, *Flesh + Blood* and *Avalon*, where funk was distilled till it floated. In this era, they went platinum in the States and sold lorryloads. Then they quit at the top.

Their legacy has pervaded – and hugely improved – countless genres since, from electronica to art-rock, from new romantic to prog, from Suede and Pulp to Radiohead and Moby. Beyond that, the élan they exuded redefined the very notion of 'attitude'. You didn't have to spit in the gutter, you could sup with the gods. Ferry's sense of classicism brought a lick of Gatsby to pop's gateaux. Undoubtedly, Roxy were truly great. And more than this.

Class being permanent, it's not as much of a risk for Roxy to return as it might be for lesser legends. Still, many will wonder: why here? Why now? After all these years?

Bryan Ferry, sitting in his Kensington studio, is anything but melodramatic about it. "Well, I'd done a lot of shows after the *As Time Goes By* album, and they went with a swing. People kept asking if there'd ever be a Roxy tour again, and I suppose now it seemed the right time, if there ever was to be one," he murmurs, sucking a cough sweet. "Irritatingly, I'm about two tracks away from finishing the album I'm working on, which will come out late this year or early next, but I'd been introducing more and more Roxy songs into the shows, and enjoyed doing them so much. Like 'Out Of The Blue', 'Virginia Plain', 'Do The Strand' – all those chestnuts! So, yeah, it's nostalgia, but the songs sound really good today. I don't feel embarrassed by them!"

Phil Manzanera is equally laid-back, putting the kettle on in his slightly Dalí-esque London pad. "We've sort of spoken about it on and off for years. Also, I was thinking, 'Nobody is playing those songs. What a terrible waste! They're just gonna be stuck there, we'll all die, and that'll be it! We spent so much time working on those tracks – now all you hear on the radio is 'Avalon' and a couple of singles. Was it all a waste of time?' Then I played with Bryan on Millennium Eve, and it was really good, and his voice sounds great. I think he's still got a lot to do on his own journey, but we thought: why don't we try it?"

Manzanera (who spent much of his childhood in South America) is now one of the most successful producers in Spanish and Latin music, routinely helming triple-platinum chart-toppers there. "You do get sucked into that! It's great. I've sometimes thought, 'Yes, Roxy would be exciting too, but this is just incredible.' You know, I'll be flown 200 miles north of Buenos Aires to record the Frank Zappa of South America where he used to rehearse when he was 15. Then he wants to do his vocals facing the Mediterranean in Capri as the sun goes down every night. Then I'll do trad boleros with a Peruvian lady in Mexico City. It's fun!

"So people'd say, 'What about Roxy?' I'd say, 'Great, and why are we doing it again?' All those songs! 'Oh, right!' And I woke up! It's all very positive. Now I'm going to have to relearn them all, in detail. And I'll have an interesting new perspective.

"It'll help me to make sense of what happened before. When you start out, you're on this pop-star trip – you're a teenager, then you have hits, and you're away. Twelve years later, you get on with your life! You get to a certain age where you look back on it all and say, 'Where did Roxy fit into this?' I mean, I answered an ad in *Melody Maker* for a guitarist, and happened to meet up with these extraordinary people. Talk about fate."

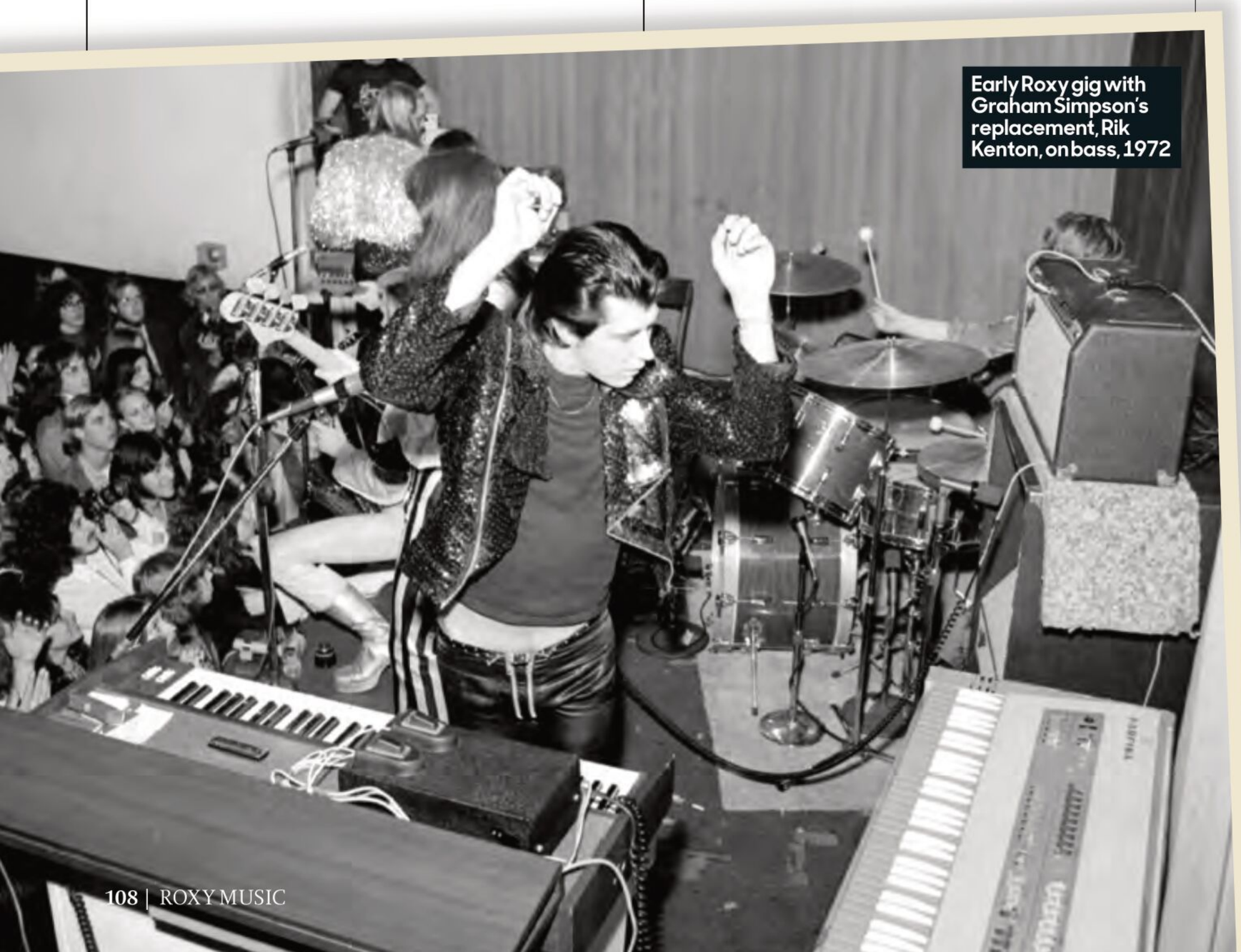
FOR Andy Mackay, the reasons for the long pause were initially "a disinclination to do it, because we all needed a break. Then we all got involved with other projects, and personal circumstances intervened. Then there was the difficulty of organising it. But this is a set number of dates, and will allow us to carry on our normal lives and our individual musical lives. So we're all happy about it.

"I enjoyed all the different Roxy phases, and had reservations about each, for different reasons. The *Avalon* tour was enjoyable, and we were doing well, in big venues, but the early tours were great because they were totally chaotic and unpredictable. Some gigs were disasters and some were triumphs, and it all lay before us."

Ferry vaguely remembers those first Roxy gigs. "There was one in the upstairs room of a pub near here – I remember that vividly. There was real energy, from the audience as well as from us. It felt really new, in a way that it doesn't now when you go and see a band. I guess part of it was the interesting lineup of sounds. Even though Bowie was around at the time, doing very good things, his was basically a guitar band, Mick Ronson being a wonderful guitarist. But with Roxy there was oboe, sax, all the synthesiser sounds, all the treated instruments. It was a lot to take in. People went, 'Woah!' Ha, I enjoyed that!"

Was your aim at the time to stretch the boundaries?

"To be different. Even though the first album doesn't 'sound' great now, there were so many possibilities touched on there. From doo-wop to the grandiose, we could go that way, or this way, or another way. It reflects a number of inspirations. I found Sinatra, Piaf, Elvis, the blues. All worlds to explore, all equally fascinating – you could take it



Early Roxy gig with Graham Simpson's replacement, Rik Kenton, on bass, 1972

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

"We had to change": Roxy Music in October 1982, a few months after the release of *Avalon*

here, there and everywhere. The eclecticism was very important."

Does it annoy you that critics tend to lazily claim you never matched that early blaze?

"It was my favourite phase, I think, and the most prolific for me. But there's a certain quality to the later work as well – *Avalon* still sounds really good, really smooth. There's beauty there. More accessible, less angular. And we had to change, otherwise it'd have been a one-dimensional career. The middle period had some nice colours too – Eddie Jobson's violin, for example. I was still trying to write crafted songs then, whereas later it was more about moods and textures.

"So much of it depends on which musicians are around. Some albums are earthy, others ethereal. I always admired Duke Ellington for using the players around him to the best advantage. But it's not always about the best instrumentalists – sometimes you get great things from people who are struggling. Which is what works about some of the early things, when we were all struggling!"

As the Roxy albums cruised by, Ferry metamorphosed from an effusive, bitter-sweet lyricist to a seemingly reluctant, coy one. Was there a point where he decided less is more, or did he lose confidence?

"I used to enjoy writing lyrics, but found it difficult later to say what I wanted to say. You get super-critical as you get older. That's one of the worst things in life. And it's why I've always enjoyed doing other people's songs – then I can just lose myself in the performance, and not be constantly worrying, 'Oh, should I rewrite that?' Having said that, there's some good lyrics on my next album. And Eno's on it."

Do you ever regret your strict quality control? Your post-Roxy Music career has had several mysterious silences.

"Yes, looking back, it's a drag. Probably, in some cases, I wasn't working with the right people. That's always been a problem with me. Sometimes a producer's worse than no producer at all, but you need someone to egg you on, push you on. I drove poor Rhett Davies to semi-retirement, but he's back with us now. Anyway, I feel freer to do this tour now. I'm more mature! Ha!"

Did it ever gall you that "Jealous Guy" was your only No 1 single, when you wrote so many brilliant songs yourself?

"Not at all, no. It's a very good song. And "Love Is The Drug" got to No 2."

So did "Dance Away".

"No, it didn't. Did it?"

Yes, definitely.

"Oh. I don't know. Perhaps it did, yes."

After Roxy, Phil Manzanera worked with everyone from John Cale to Pink Floyd to Godley & Creme, while Mackay's written music for films and plays, studied theology, and of course played on the soundtrack to *Velvet Goldmine*, which reinvented several old Roxy tracks, with Thom Yorke. "It was funny," he recalls. "I hadn't played 'Ladytron' for 20 years, but it came back remarkably easy. Other stuff I'd completely forgotten." Asked if Roxy will remain the perfect blend of substance and style, he responds, "It's not something you think about. You look as good as you can and play as well as you can."

"The dressing up was always part of the fun of Roxy," smiles Manzanera. "People tend to overlook the humour that was there. At first, it was just us and Bowie doing it, in a context of everybody else not doing it. The more extreme we got, the bigger the reaction. It was a bit of theatre. And it sounds crazy, but hardly anyone was using proper lighting before then. It was a big deal, as were synths.

"It also gave us something to do to conquer the nerves and feelings of amateurishness before we went on. It'd be: yes, more makeup, more outrageous costumes! We had lots of friends in fashion. It was never prearranged, we never saw each other's stuff until five minutes before the set, so we'd turn up and freak each other out. By the '80s, it was all designed."

Asked if the chemistry between the three will remain, Ferry, as he does after most questions, pauses and thinks awhile. "It might be worse, ha! No, it'll just be better organised. You have to remember we've spent more time apart than together. Sometimes you don't fall out as such with people, you just sort of drift away."

So when Roxy ended in '83, was that a decision or just a drift?

"There was no real dispute. After *Avalon*, which was a tough act to follow, I wanted to do an album of my own songs, and thought I'd done enough group albums. Now, I wish I had done that – *Boys And Girls* – with the group. It was a very painful record to make. I was very tired, but also a glutton for punishment. I worked with far too many musicians and in the end it was a very expensive piece of tapestry, really."

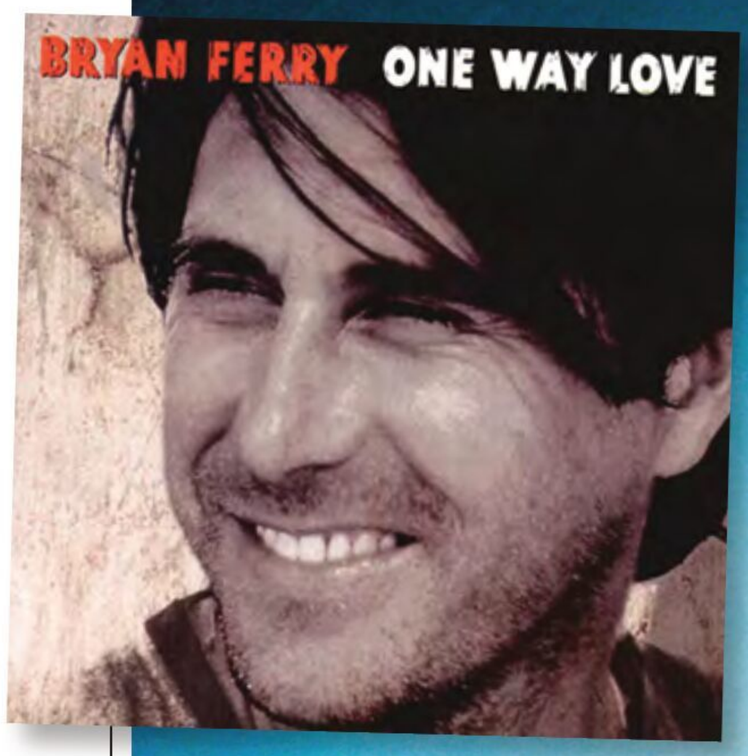
"I found it difficult later to say what I wanted to say"

BRYAN FERRY

"We were all so busy," remembers Manzanera. "Going for it on all fronts. And I guess we needed some space. But there is definitely some magic that happens with Roxy. We're old enough to recognise that now! It doesn't mean we have to do it all the time, or that it's the main thing, but if it's a good thing, why not do it? Even though we're going 'back there', it's a brave move.

"We have to project it, make it come to life again. There's this thing called Roxy Music which is bigger than all of us individually. You say

DPA PICTURE ALLIANCE / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



'Roxy Music' and your mind is free to wander into all sorts of areas and fantasies. When all these bands say they're influenced by Roxy, maybe they mean the idea of Roxy as well."

Andy Mackay hears their influence around. "I think Bryan influenced a whole generation of British singers. Bryan, and Bowie to an extent, didn't sing in an American accent, and that liberated just about every British band since.

"Our use of synthesisers was creative and exciting. We certainly didn't invent eclecticism, but we did prove that rock'n'roll could accommodate – well, anything, really."

So is this tour pure nostalgia? Or will you be playing around with that inevitability, subverting it?

"People have been questioning this," says Mackay, "as if somehow, unlike any other art form – I hesitate to call rock'n'roll an art form, let's say quasi-art form – you shouldn't revive things. No-one ever says that about a Noël Coward or Shakespeare play, or Beethoven's *Third Symphony*. You don't say, oh but Ludwig's done nine, you can only play the *Ninth* now. In Handel's day, he had to have a new opera every year – and it ruined all the theatres.

"This seems to me totally right. We're the people who perform those numbers best, and we hope to make them every bit as fresh and important as ever. You hope that every time a piece of music is performed, it lives again."

Poring over the artwork to yet another Roxy best-of album, Bryan Ferry laughs, "Look at the number of times they repackaged Sinatra's songs! The record company's argument is it's 10 years since the last compilation, so I'd rather get involved a little than fight it. The audience at these shows will probably want some kind of souvenir."

There's something very civilised about Ferry, Manzanera and Mackay. Charming, modest company, they've long since stopped worrying about 'rock' posing and posturing, and this, by accident or design, preserves the timeless Roxy cool under amber. They stress that the shows will include as much material from the early days as from the crossover coda.

"Different people are of different sensibilities," says Ferry, correctly. "Some prefer 'The Bogus Man', some prefer 'Oh Yeah'. Hopefully, we'll do both. I say 'hopefully' because we're rehearsing around 40 songs from around a hundred possibles."

Are you content that Roxy's active lifespan covered the years it did? Or would you rather you were a new band emerging now?

"It's a shame our early years didn't have any video life as such. I was always very taken by movies, by visuals. It's annoying that those tours have disappeared into the ether, with no film record. But you can't turn the clock back. Maybe it'd've got in the way of the music. And it was all less about corporate marketing then. You presented them with the records, and the covers, and they said, 'Great!'"

And before video ruled, perhaps more imagery and imagination was crammed...

"...Into the songs! Yes, you're right. Y'know it always felt like nobody else was doing anything like what we were doing."

YOUR new solo album is called *Frantic*. 'Frantic' isn't a very Bryan Ferry word, is it?

"It's a good rock'n'roll word! Nice and short and to the point, punchy and direct. It suited the last days of making this record, and the mood in which it was created, which were hectic. I'd been working on my live tour, then the Roxy tour – juggling a lot of projects at the same time. The record company were screaming for the finished album, and things were nothing if not frantic."

Will that mood come across to the listener?

"Probably not. Because now it's finished, it's all calmed down a bit. I think it's a well-balanced record, in terms of moods. But I wanted to do an uptempo, rockier thing than the album of '30s songs, *As Time Goes By*, that I did a couple of years ago – as a contrast. I will go there again, but this time I wanted to get some electric guitars out. *Mamouna*, for example, which seems a million years ago now, was a quiet, rich-sounding, layered thing. This is more live, there are more juxtapositions."

Did the long-awaited Roxy world tour energise or exhaust you?

"Oh, the whole thing was a wonderful success – we might even do something like that again. It was great to take its energy, and some of the players – Paul Thompson and Chris Spedding in particular – and ride on it here. And I enjoyed putting on a show which was all my songs, from those Roxy albums. To do a focused show about that, with the guys. It was great to work with them again. And to see the audiences who love that music: there were younger elements in there too, who can't have ever seen the band play before. A fresh wave of enthusiasm. That's always good.

"The touring made me want to toughen up this record. When you're used to working with strings and saxophones, softer sounds, it's nice to be on stage in arenas and hear lots of cranked-up guitars, and Paul thrashing away. Nobody beefs things up better than him."

How did Jonny Greenwood come to play guitar on the track "Hiroshima"?

"He's somebody who's emerged over the last few years, but is the kind of player I like: inventive, adventurous. I'd thought Radiohead were working in a similar sort of area to mine. It's not really so far removed. He proved to be really good and exciting. When you make an album over a period of time, like this one, you get the chance to work with a wide variety of people.

"It's a strange song, that one. The music suggested to me this rather bleak science-fiction world, which has been sketched in by films like Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*, and William Gibson's cyber-punk writing.

"The movies have explored it quite well. I tried to work in this strange lyric, where you're jumping through time and place. I started thinking of Osaka, and all these amazing neon streets, smoke rising up from the sidewalk, strange eerie people... all that. I like that kind of place, at least to be fantasising about in a song. And then there was the classic French nouvelle vague film *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*, directed by Alain Resnais – another inspiration. It's very angst-ridden, but quite rich and sultry and... swirling. I've been to Japan lots

GIEKNAEPS/GETTY IMAGES

Blue mood: Rock Werchter Festival, Belgium, July 2001

of times and love the look of the place, especially at night. It's very different from anywhere else, visually very exciting."

The other obviously movie-related track is 'San Simeon', which bears stirring echoes of *For Your Pleasure*...
"Yes, I wrote the chord sequence and stuff with Dave Stewart, but then took it away, as I do, to work on. And I found this set of lyrics I had from when I was writing 'In Every Dream Home A Heartache' in '73. Some of these, which I'd left out and never used, were perfect for this song. It's either a return to 'Dream Home...', or an extension of it. It's more particularised. It's about this place, San Simeon, the American newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst's fairytale castle, which he built in California. And of course Orson Welles made one of the great movies, *Citizen Kane*, about the man and the house – which was called Xanadu in the film.

"Anyway, you wander into the song and you're in this kind of ghostly castle, where all the memories of a very glamorous past come flooding in on you. This house was the party place for Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Barrymore, Chaplin – all the greats of Hollywood's early days. The whole idea of this appealed to me. It was rather wistful and... Proustian. And it's a bit Cocteau-ish as well, with a touch of *Beauty And The Beast*, perhaps. The flickering images, the black-and-white... Oh, and the opening scene of Hitchcock's *Rebecca* might be in there too... That's one of my favourite pictures. What happens is all these images and memories combine in your imagination: one thing will kick it off for me, then something else will jump in as well. It becomes very interesting, I think, how your mind leaps from one thing to another. Especially if you're mad."

You've worked with Brian Eno again here. Was that fun or forced?
"I guess 'I Thought', which closes the album, is only the second time I've worked with Brian since the Roxy days so many years back. We co-wrote that, and he also plays on 'Goddess Of Love' and 'One Way Love'. He sings on both, too – with gusto!

"I find it terrific to work with somebody with whom you've had a very close and fruitful working relationship, but one which you've never overplayed, as it were. People forget we only spent two years, two albums, together. Perhaps if we'd spent 10 years in Roxy together, we wouldn't have had so much to say later on! Every time now, I feel there's a freshness about it. I went to visit him in St Petersburg, where he was staying, and the song emerged from there. I don't know whether that comes across, as it's an introspective thing. We sort of ride off into the sunset together, with my *The Third Man*-style harmonica working against the more fanciful, posher instruments..."

"Brian sings on 'One Way Love' – with gusto"
BRYAN FERRY

Is 'Goodnight Irene' included to re-emphasise your (often overlooked) love of old-fashioned, earthy blues?
"Mmm – Leadbelly was the first blues singer I ever heard, when I was a young lad. I was completely captivated and became a big blues fan after that. That was a great foundation for me – it led me into soul, jazz, R&B. The casual listener might not be so aware, but it's very much part of my sensibility, as people who follow me know.

"There's an interesting contrast between that very raw music, which I feel, and then all the dressing up and artiness which I've done in my career, both with Roxy and outside it. But to me all the visual things don't contradict the soul. Even those early blues singers had great style – they had their own look. You see pictures of Leadbelly in his bow-tie and linen suit, and he's... giving it some. The jazz men always had a kind of glamour too. Charlie Parker and all those people were a bit laddish, y'know? A bit naughty.

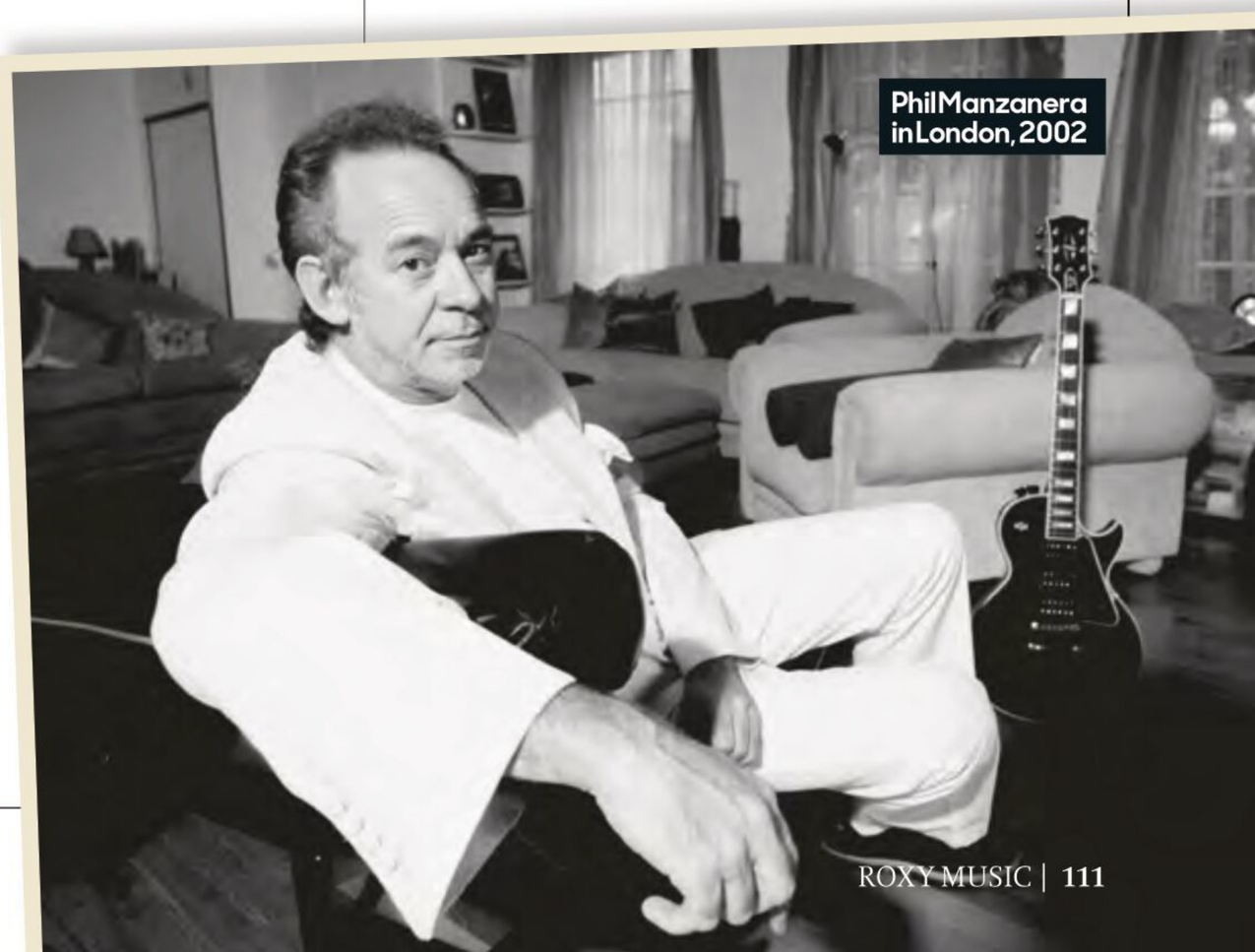
"I remember hearing Leadbelly and being really moved. I was staggered, actually. There's a yearning and longing in his voice, in everything he sings. In Billie Holiday's, too. It's stayed with me ever since. I like songs with an angst about them. The sound may be uplifting in the blues, but the message is always rather sad."

Your lyrics on this album are classic Ferry: lots of *"heartache"* and *"impossible true love"*. There seems to be this constant, doomed romantic searching for an unattainable ideal.
"Hmm, well... you've got to have some... holy grail, if you like. 'Nobody Loves Me' has that bluesy tinge of, 'Oh God, nobody understands me, isn't life terrible, if only...' – but that's where a lot of the best music comes from. As the singer, you take on the point of view of the down-and-out hero. Hopefully one doesn't feel like that all the time, but you know what it's like, so you live the song and do it."

Do you relate to Marilyn Monroe?
"Well, let's say it was about time I fitted her into a song, 'Goddess Of Love'. She was obviously the ultimate screen goddess, and a Pop Art icon, immortalised by Warhol and by my old art teacher at university, Richard Hamilton, the godfather of English Pop Art. He was a huge influence on me. Marilyn was seized on by artists as the face of Hollywood. I threw some catchphrases of hers in – it's just a pop song, really, but it has its place in the pack. In my studio, there are lots of posters and photographs of her scattered around, so she's always looking down on me as I work. There's a warmth and vulnerability about her that we find fascinating. And the tragedy adds to the myth and mystique, as with James Dean, Maria Callas, Jackie O..."

Are you living in the Middle Ages on "Fool For Love"?
"I thought that a courtly, medieval feel would be good there. It gets us away from the urban ghetto of American R&B for a while. Yes, dragons, unicorns, wizards – you can't have too many of those these days! And the introductory piece is a French song written by Richard The Lionheart. It's good to see a king on the writing credits!"

You're more soul boy than sultan of suave these days?
"I'd like to think I was a beautiful blend of both! Others might not endorse that..."



Phil Manzanera in London, 2002

LONDON, on the Strand, and Roxy Music are doing it again. Behind the impressive Art Deco façade of the Savoy Hotel, Bryan Ferry, Phil Manzanera and Andy Mackay are sharp-suited and soft-spoken. Roxy gathered the world's press here two years ago to announce their reunion tour, after 18 years' separation.

Today, they're emerging at the other end of that journey, and have assembled to tell *Uncut* exclusively whether going back on the Roxy road has been a thrilling or traumatising experience. They're also, of course, plugging a live double album, and a huge mid-July Hyde Park concert.

Mr Ferry looks superbly well, but says he isn't. He seems even more dream-caught and distracted than usual, but does crack self-effacing jokes with a sigh. Mr Manzanera is friendly and forthcoming, and the least tortuous to interview. Mr Mackay speaks even more quietly than Mr Ferry, which is really saying something, albeit barely audibly.

Each persists with solo work. Ferry plans to follow up his 2002 album *Frantic* next year, Mackay is forming an instrumental sax-led band and Manzanera is madly prolific. Yet each now appreciates the unique, resonant magic of Roxy. "Yes, I've realised its merits," says Ferry. We tuck into the grapes and strawberries and begin.

UNCUT: So, the reunion they said would never happen: fun? You're all still speaking to each other?

PM: I must say, I've really enjoyed it. I think if you have a gap of 18 years and then you don't enjoy it, you must be psychologically damaged. Which I probably am, but if so, it's worked for me.

AM: It's beautiful, very satisfying. Been a great pleasure, gentlemen.

BF: I've been on a journey ever since we announced the reunion, what with a long solo tour, too. I'm acquiring a taste for life on the road, yes. It seems more rewarding for me, in many ways, than making records. It used to be the other way round. Something just clicked and I overcame my reticence about touring. But if someone had said that to me a few years ago, when I was trapped in technology, I'd have scoffed at them, yes.

So what changed?

BF: I think... it just seems a better way of living than... real life! Ha! It's been like running away to join the circus. From somewhere else to somewhere else every day, so nobody catches up with you. Hellhound on my trail. I'm very much like Dean Moriarty now.

You didn't tire of the soundcheck/show/hotel routine?

BF: Beautiful. A routine. Marvellous. Wonderful. You know what you have to do. Have I become institutionalised? Well, it is a bit like that, really, yes. Exactly like that, even. It's a bit baffling when you come off the road, after such a long time. What do I do now? I generally make a few phone calls to see if I'm on anywhere.

PM: You have to be focused now, to plan things right, so that you enjoy it. When we started out, when I was 21, it was just a rollercoaster ride being in Roxy. You're going up and up, it's wonderful, but you can't appreciate it. It's what you've dreamed about, but it all happens so fast. There's this whole world of fame and celebrity, how your friends and family change towards you after you've been on the telly – and it's very complex. Not so much for me, perhaps, as for Bryan, but I tasted it. So now the benefit of being a bit older is you can savour it more. I can imagine what it must be like to be an old blues player now. You get on the stage and you try and play with feeling, and believe in the music whether it's weird stuff or a pop song. And you come to terms with that.

Did the world tour bring back any flashbacks from the early years?

BF: Not really, for me: I don't have any memory. It's all burned away. Couldn't jog it back, no – it's gone. You think we weren't wild, hard-living rock'n'roll monsters, do you? Well, we were, y'know. Ha! Although I suppose Fleetwood Mac had the edge over us...

AM: It was peculiar. Things I'd forgotten from a long time ago would come back to me during a song. But back then we were considerably more thrashy. Now we have in-ear monitors. But we still get nerves and stage fright, or at least I do. That strengthens you. They always say Laurence Olivier was sick before he went on stage, then performed brilliantly, so it's a good sign.

No horrendous ego clashes under pressure?

PM: There has to be a certain amount of tension to get your creative juices flowing. People have different points of view, and when you're young you always want to push yours forward and win. But then you learn how to get the best from a situation by not getting all worked up. Now, just from knowing a bit more about the mechanics of relationships and being alive, it's easier. You use any creative tension, but not so much that it explodes. If it became too lovey-dovey, it wouldn't have any edge. With a bit of ducking and diving, ideas can become better ideas.

MATT CARMICHAEL/GETTY IMAGES

Roxy Music reunited for the first time since 2001 on a mini US tour supporting their recent Live DVD/CD, Chicago, July 31, 2003

BF: It's been really good. Phil and Andy both turned it on every night, and I was impressed. They each have their own following and a unique sound. They're very good at recapturing the mood of each song. And it's amazing how well we all got along really. I mean, we still kept our, sort of... distance from each other, I suppose. We each had our own private jet. I wish! Yes, and I had my valets all around me! They had their nannies.
AM: Considering it's hard, physically demanding work, and a long set, we all got on fine. There was still a lot of freshness and a lot of weirdness.

Surely you each pushed for favourite songs?
PM: I always like a heavier sound... songs like "In Every Dream Home A Heartache", "Mother Of Pearl", "Ladytron" "Out Of The Blue". You slot them in today next to Radiohead or The White Stripes or something and they don't sound cheesy or '70s or dated. They retain a core. We always said we were inspired amateurs back then, and were learning to play. By the time we got to "Avalon", it was a lot smoother. We only just decided we'd play it. That speaks volumes.
BF: Yes, we've been doing a lot of the early stuff. Some of these songs aren't so well known to some audiences. The later stuff, well, it has good tunes, and don't forget *Avalon* was by far the biggest album for the band. But it was the least... I don't mean to say least exciting... the least unique, really. Then again, it has a completeness of sound. It's just a different world from *For Your Pleasure*, which is high up there for me.
PM: The poppier ones work so well on record, but they're not always such fun to play. I think we all dread playing "Dance Away", but people want to hear it. If, in a parallel universe, I went to see The Beatles, I realise I'd want to hear the stuff exactly as I knew it. As a musician I feel bad about that, as if I should know better, but as a punter I'd want to relive the song I knew. Would I want to hear a radical ska-punk version of "Avalon"? Well, yes, actually, but not by Roxy!
AM: We recorded just about every show on the tour, so for this live album we listened to countless versions of most songs. I had to give up trying to choose; we all did in the end. Of course, I just started comparing the sax solos. It's hard if you're pleased with one version but the others aren't, or vice versa. So past a certain point we mainly left it to [*Roxy co-producer*] Rhett Davies: he can be objective.

Another live album, then. But the big question: will we be hearing any brand-new Roxy songs in the foreseeable?
PM: I hope so. I do. Whenever Bryan or Andy want to collaborate, I'm always positive. Because now it doesn't always have to be, 'Ooh, it's Roxy or nothing.' We all have our own different musical journeys, but yes. I hope we could do something special.
BF: Listen, say, three years ago, I wouldn't've even thought about it. But as a result of the tour, I could imagine it. There is a real quirkiness about their playing...
AM: There's no official group opinion on that as such. Personally, I'd very much like to. Making albums isn't always fun – they tend to start well, but after a couple of weeks there are certain things I wouldn't enjoy. But I do think we could come up with something really impressive.

You still enjoy singing, Bryan?
BF: Oh God, yes, very much. But I recently got some sort of throat problem and my voice packed up. I had to postpone some shows, which was a drag. It's been very worrying; briefly, I thought my days were numbered. I'm seeing three different doctors. One is a singing expert, one is a voice therapist, and the other's a sort of neck physiotherapist who massages your larynx. I was astonished at how specialised that whole world is. Sticking their fingers up your nose, little torches... It's like sci-fi. I was slightly freaked out, but I hope to be all right. Oh, did you know I got a Lifetime Achievement award?

Ah yes, the Ivor Novello, for your outstanding contribution to British music.
BF: Yes. Ha! I dragged myself along, feeling like a fish out of water, really. Like James Stewart tottering up the stairs for his overdue Oscar or something. I'm not used to stepping up in those ceremony events, but now I've got something to show the children. I'd never had any... medals, or anything like that. It was funny, 'cos I went to see Dave Stewart and was very annoyed because he has dozens of them, all sorts. And I've got my paltry one award. There's no justice in the world! It was interesting at the event to meet Brian Wilson, though, who was also accepting an award. I was a huge fan of his. I think I was warmly received, I don't know. It was all a bit of a blur, actually.

"It's been like running away to join the circus"
BRYAN FERRY

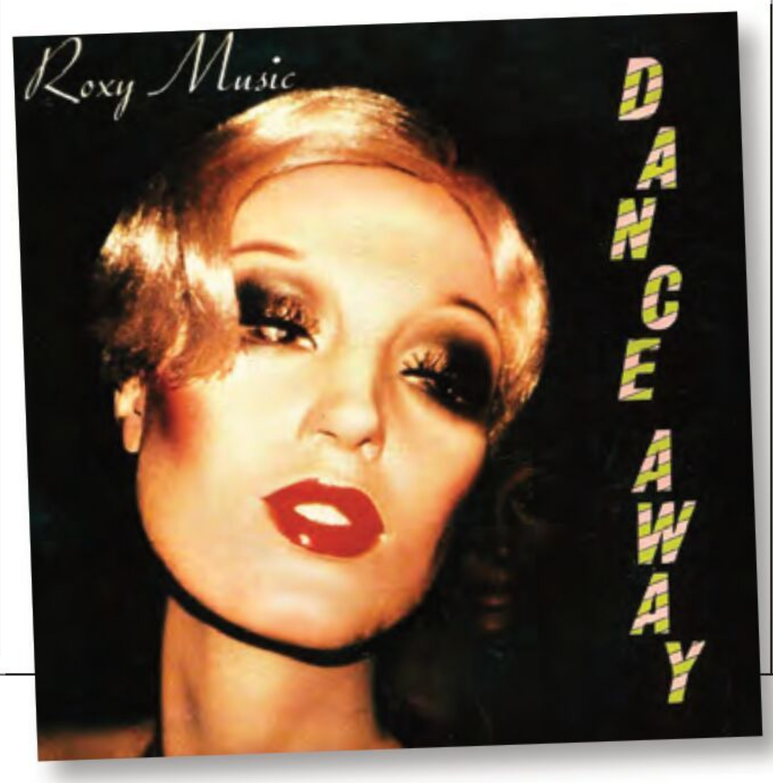
Do you hear Roxy's influence around as much as critics do?
AM: It sounds a bit arrogant to say yes, but I'm sure it's there. Of course Bryan's vocals influenced people – his voice clearly came from soul as well as rock'n'roll, yet it clearly sounded English. I'm sad there aren't more sax players in rock. I'd have liked to think I made it more accessible as an alternative rock instrument, not just a jazz thing. Also trumpets, trombones. It's a mystery to me why young people don't go for it, or if they do, they're terribly earnest and serious about it.
PM: Early on, we were very intuitive and created this beautiful context for Bryan to plant his lyrics, his world, over. With hindsight that was multi-dimensional, film-like. Before this tour, perhaps we were beginning to be considered old dogs that were about to be shot and put out of their misery, but now our tails are wagging again. I'm going down the wrong route; cancel that!

How are your sons?
BF: Pretty good, really. One's a drummer – he's funky and I envy him, he's really good. One's taken up guitar. One's a very good artist. But the fact that I'm going through this lengthy divorce process is very soul-destroying and debilitating. That's been harsh. A problem like that takes up an awful lot of time, and there's so much to do. I'm endlessly doing things now, which wasn't always my way.

Ever wish you worked in a different field?
BF: I'm quite surprised I haven't done film scores... but then nobody's ever asked me! I'm quite fussy, so it'd have to be a film I liked. But people think of me as someone behind a mic rather than a composer. Ironically, I've spent much more time creating music in dark studios than I have singing it under bright lights. It's weird. I love Bernard Herrmann.

The abiding tour image will surely be the plumed girls emerging from the wings to "Do The Strand"...
BF: Yes, I think that worked well. As a finale, people love it. I've always liked that kind of Vegas/Folies Bergère thing. It's nice having girls on stage anyway – sometimes rock'n'roll is such a male preserve. And a bit drab for that. So it's nice to tart it up a bit. But of course with the female musicians, too, we have a big female presence. Which is how it should be in Roxy. There's already sufficient quartets of sweaty blokes in jeans around.

As a famous style guru, can you pop down the shops in a tatty, stained tracksuit?
BF: Ha! You should've seen me yesterday in my tracksuit. Wandering the streets of north-west London trying to find this voice physiotherapist's place. I didn't get recognised at all, no. But then, I don't wear tracksuits very often, to be honest with you. ✪ *INTERVIEWS: CHRIS ROBERTS*



THE SOLO ALBUMS

BRYAN FERRY 2000s

RELEASED: 2002-2018

A terrifying air incident; the stars gather in tribute. Yet 21st-century Ferry brims with life, collaborating with innovators old and new and jazzing up Roxy's legacy. **BY PIERS MARTIN**

THAT it took a near-death experience to shake Bryan Ferry from the slumber of the 1990s perhaps indicates how removed from reality, even by his standards, the singer had become during that decade. Bookended by covers albums and stuffed with *Mamouna* – a midlife crisis featuring 112 musicians – as the '90s wore on, Ferry seemed to fade from relevance, like an old photograph left in the sun.

So when the Nairobi-bound British Airways flight he and his family were travelling on almost crashed on December 29, 2000 as the result of a mentally ill passenger storming the cockpit and attempting to hijack the plane, which plummeted 10,000ft in a matter of seconds before the pilots resumed control, one positive outcome of the incident is that it instilled in Ferry a degree of urgency about his work. "You get a tremendous sense of relief when something like that is over," he told *The Guardian* in 2002. "You certainly worry more about getting things done."

True to his word, and at his own speed, Ferry started this century with the successful Roxy Music reunion of 2001, which breathed life into *Frantic*, his 11th solo album, released the following year. As with most things involving Dave Stewart as co-writer and producer, *Frantic* is a mixed bag that finds Ferry covering his bases with typically crumpled conviction: there are Dylan renditions ("It's All Over Now, Baby Blue", "Don't Think Twice, It's Alright"), a couple of blues standards, and a swathe of uptempo originals as well as the atmospheric pieces "Hiroshima" and "San Simeon", which add a touch of Roxyish melancholy. At 57, Ferry sounds rejuvenated by his former band's comeback and energised by the calibre of contributors to *Frantic*, including Brian Eno (on the lovely final track "I Thought"), Roxy's Paul Thompson and Chris Spedding; plus young bloods Jonny Greenwood and Alison Goldfrapp.

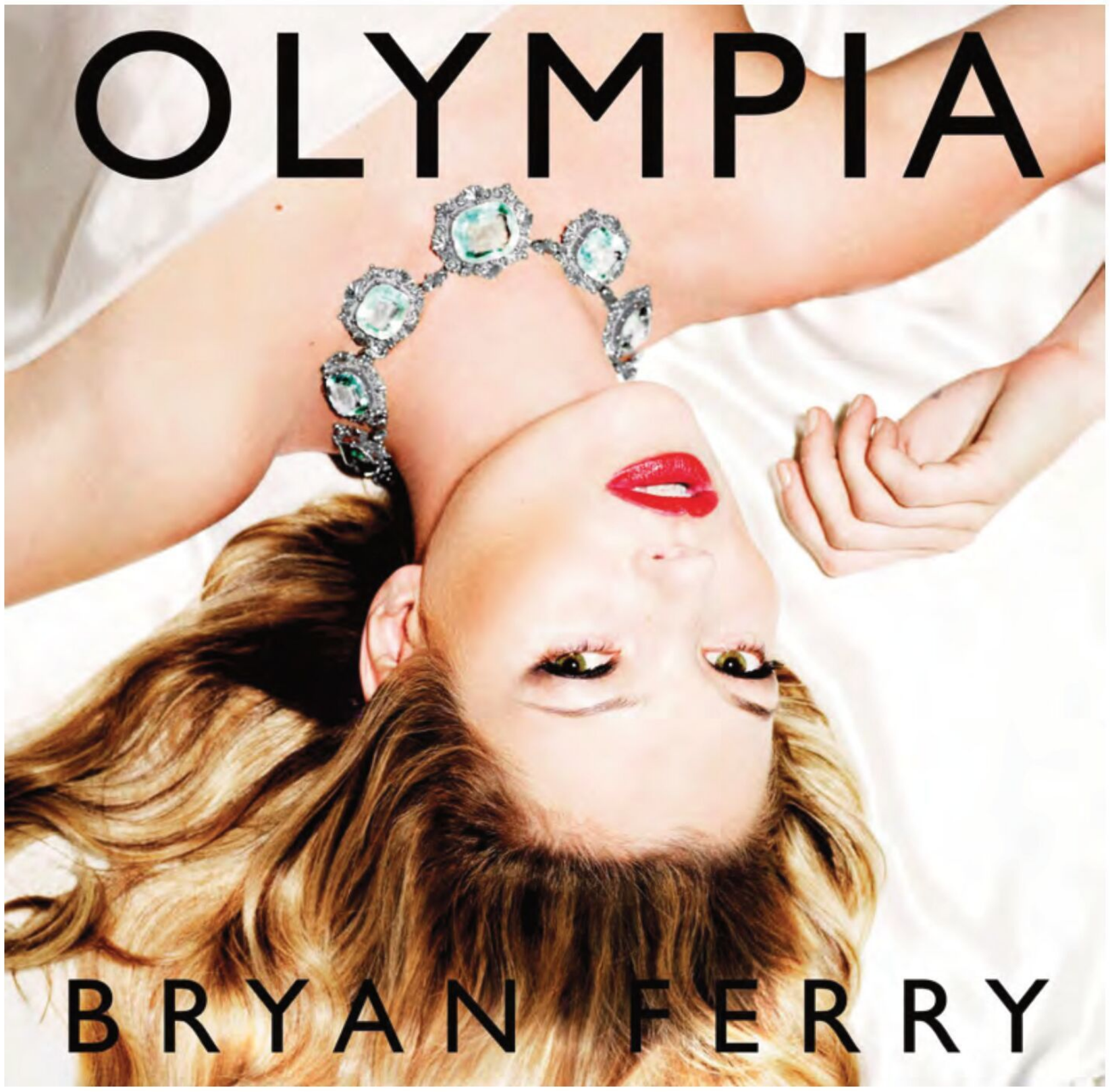
With both Roxy and his solo career back on track by the mid-'00s, and rumours of a new Roxy album in the pipeline, Ferry returned to one of his favourite songwriters for *Dylanesque*, a comforting collection of 11 Bob Dylan staples. Having shocked with a glammed-up "A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall" in 1973, Ferry now took a sedately groovy approach to "Positively 4th Street" and "Gates Of Eden", his quivering croon savouring the richness of the words, though lacking the bite for some of Bob's barbs. You might also expect a deeper rummage in the vaults from such a Dylan buff.

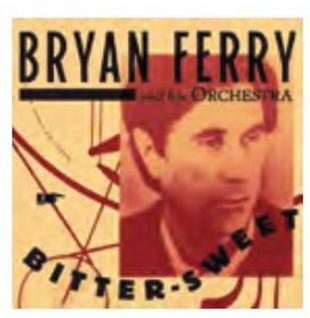
By 2010 the mooted Roxy album had been knocked on the head, though you wonder how much from those sessions, in spirit at least, made its way on to *Olympia*. Ferry's best solo set since *Boys And Girls*, its noirish mood of after-hours fantasy was partly informed by European techno and US R&B, but still essentially rooted in Roxy's playboy pop. Named after the west London area where Ferry's studio is located, and featuring Kate Moss on the cover in a pose inspired by Manet's *Olympia*, this recasts Ferry as the lady-killing lounge lizard for a new decade and a new generation, ageless in spite of his 65 years. The material is solid, too: "You Can Dance", with its three bassists ploughing away, is a version of DJ Hell's 2009 house prowler "U Can Dance" which

CRITICS' VERDICTS

OLYMPIA
"The tendency to overload and overwork the song [...] comes to a head on the cover of Tim Buckley's 'Song To The Siren'."
Stephen Troussé, Uncut, Nov 2010

AVONMORE
"*Avonmore*... sounds like a man stirring from his ennui, popping the cork on a fresh bottle of Moët and striding purposefully for one more spin around the dancefloor."
Michael Bonner, Uncut, Dec 2014





TRACKMARKS

FRANTIC ★★★
Label: Virgin
Released: 29 April 2002
Produced by: Bryan Ferry, Colin Good, Rhett Davies, Dave Stewart, Robin Trower
Recorded at: RAK and Studio One, London
Highest chart position: UK 6; US 189

DYLANESQUE
★★★★
Label: Virgin
Released: 5 March 2007
Produced by: Bryan Ferry, Rhett Davies
Recorded at: The Town House, Studio One and RAK, London; 4th Street Recording, Santa Monica
Highest chart position: UK 5; US 117

OLYMPIA
★★★★
Label: Virgin
Released: 25 October 2010
Produced by: Bryan Ferry, Johnson Somerset, Rhett Davies
Recorded at: 4th Street Recording, Santa Monica
Highest chart position: UK 19; US 71

THE JAZZ AGE
★★★
Label: BMG
Released: 26 November 2012
Produced by: Bryan Ferry, Rhett Davies
Recorded at: Studio One, London
Highest chart position: UK 50; US –

AVONMORE
★★★
Label: BMG
Released: 17 November 2014
Produced by: Bryan Ferry, Johnson Somerset, Rhett Davies, Todd Terje
Recorded at: Studio One, London; 4th Street Recording, Santa Monica; Saltlands Studio, Brooklyn
Highest chart position: UK 19; US 72

BITTER-SWEET
★★★★
Label: BMG
Released: 30 November 2018
Produced by: Bryan Ferry, Rhett Davies
Recorded at: Studio One, London
Highest chart position: UK 60; US –

Ferry purred on, and "Shameless" is an update of a Groove Armada collaboration. The guitars of David Gilmour, Greenwood and Phil Manzanera are coalesced by Eno on an overcooked cover of Tim Buckley's "Song To The Siren", while the moonlight swirl of "Reason Or Rhyme", the most satisfying song he's written in years, and "Tender Is The Night", as sentimental as a John Lewis Christmas ad, close *Olympia* on an opiated high.

Ferry thought highly enough of "Reason Or Rhyme" that, two years later, he included a rendition of it on *The Jazz Age*, an album of solo and Roxy hits spanning 40 years performed in a Roaring Twenties jazz style by The Bryan Ferry Orchestra. His role here is bandleader rather than singer; these are jaunty instrumentals packed with character that conjure flappers and F Scott Fitzgerald and underline the songs' magnetic charm. Even without his voice, Ferry's attention to detail and passion for the genre shine through in the woodwind arrangements for "Love Is The Drug" and "Avalon". This is the music he listened to as a child – as you'd expect – and he admitted its influence on Roxy Music back in 1972.

FOLLOWING such frivolity, *Avonmore* (2014) is business as usual: suave, dark and, at a certain angle, still handsome, though Ferry sounds increasingly fragile on songs like "Lost" and "Special Kind Of Guy", his voice a mannered whisper. Informed but not defined by his 19-month marriage to Amanda Sheppard, an acquaintance of one of his sons some 38 years his junior, Ferry seems forlorn (but then he always does) – "*I can't tell you what is right and what is wrong,*" he sighs on "Lost" – and after a while the tracks' sophisticated melancholy has an enervating effect, almost smothering any pleasure. Once more the stars queue up to play – Nile Rodgers, Mark Knopfler and Johnny Marr appear – but you'd struggle to recognise their parts in the treacly mix. Even Norwegian disco producer Todd Terje falls in line with the tasteful production for the cover of Robert Palmer's "Johnny And Mary", a respectful nod from one ladies' man to another.

OLYMPIA'S NOIRISH MOOD OF AFTER-HOURS FANTASY WAS PARTLY INFORMED BY EUROPEAN TECHNO AND US R&B

Credited to Bryan Ferry And His Orchestra, *Bitter-Sweet* (2018) is his latest catalogue revision, this time featuring songs performed in a Weimar-era jazz style, all softly shuffling ragtime and blues. Unlike *The Jazz Age*, here Ferry sings on eight tracks, thankfully, his whisper taking on an air of menace as he croaks, on "Zamba", "*Girl, you drive me crazy – why you never come around?*" Inspired by his involvement with the soundtrack to the Netflix series *Babylon Berlin* – he performed in the show's nightclub – you can see why Ferry, now 73, enjoys this kind of self-referential easy-listening nostalgia; it's a beautiful package and musically impeccable. But for a performer who has always drawn from the past and the future with such panache, you hope he has at least one more stone-cold modernist classic in him. ✪

Out of the blue: Ferry in his studio, December 2006

"Some people like you to be difficult and weird and underground"

The Roxy Music maestro tells TOM PINNOCK about his best solo work, and what it did for him. "I opened up my audience," he says, "to a more mainstream group of people who maybe hadn't 'got' Roxy Music."

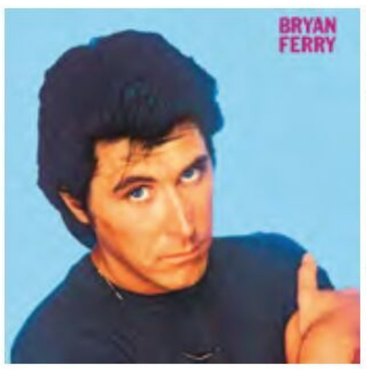
DAVID ELLIS

Cool, pool player: Tokyo, December 1978

TAKEN FROM UNCUT MAY 2015

MUCH as you'd imagine, Bryan Ferry's west London studio/office complex is a stylish and sophisticated place. Once through the main doors, a visitor must pass a row of sofas neatly strewn with *For Your Pleasure* cushions, then walls bearing pictures of models and a neon 'Roxy Music' sign, before descending a flight of stairs to Ferry's studio itself. There, the man offers insight into some of the more intriguing synths and keyboards on display. "What's the oldest one here? Hmm, either this Farfisa or the VCS3..." says Ferry, motioning nonchalantly to the EMS synth used by Eno on Roxy's first two albums. Today, though, we're here at Ferry's HQ to discuss his often spectacular solo career, from *These Foolish Things* right up to last year's *Avonmore*. "I don't write often," explains Ferry, as he relaxes in his office space upstairs. "So when I do, it feels special. If there's something happening I like the sound of, I'll record it, then I might listen to it a month later or a year or two later. So hopefully there's a few great things lying on a cassette that haven't been listened to yet!"

TOM PINNOCK



THESE FOOLISH THINGS

VIRGIN, 1973

Ferry branches out after Roxy's second LP with a singular set of covers – including Dylan's "A Hard Rain..." and the "square" title track – influencing Bowie's *Pin Ups* in the process.

After *For Your Pleasure*, I just wanted to make another record. So I thought I'd make one like Elvis or Sinatra or Billie Holiday or Bing Crosby would. I loved the albums I had of great singers singing great songs, written by songwriters in teams. I did this really fast, in about two or three weeks, and it was such fun. It was good to just get out of the group, out of the group angst. Phil Manzanera guested on it and Paul Thompson played drums, so there was a bit of Roxy on it. I don't think Roxy minded me doing a solo album... I don't think I ever asked them. But, I don't know, it didn't do any harm. Bowie actually telephoned me. We must have done the [*Finsbury Park*] Rainbow show with him before that, and the Greyhound in Croydon, another show where Roxy supported Bowie. David rang me cheerfully one day and said, "Just to let you know, I've just done an album like yours." But it wasn't really, it was a covers LP, but all from the '60s, whereas mine was a more comprehensive take on pop, just lots of different people who were interesting to me, writers like Goffin & King, Leiber & Stoller, The Rolling Stones, Smokey Robinson, of course, and Dylan. The most important of all was the title track – that was the most adventurous, being a 1930s song. It was considered really square music at the time. This album opened up my audience to a more mainstream group of people who maybe hadn't 'got' Roxy Music. And singing some of these great songs was a way of getting to them. The downside of it, of course, is that some more snobbish music people don't like you to do something that's more mainstream, people like you to be difficult and weird and underground.

ANOTHER TIME, ANOTHER PLACE

ISLAND, 1974

After *Stranded*, Ferry returns with another covers album, this time taking a more soulful tack

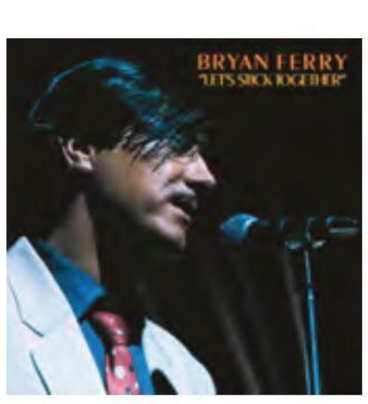
KOHHASEBE/SHINKOMUSIC/GETTY IMAGES

and featuring the stunning "The 'In' Crowd".

The first record was a great success for me, and suddenly I had two careers. I went back and made *Stranded* after the first one, then I made this. With the same team as the first one, pretty much. Except I did one of my own songs on this, the title track. There was no big theory behind it. Once again we did another standard, "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes", one of the best songs I've ever heard. And I had another Dylan song on there. Davy O'List played a great solo on "The 'In' Crowd". I'd seen him when I was a student in Newcastle. We used to have quite good bands playing there, and they had The Nice playing, and he was the guitarist. It stuck in my memory what a great player he was. He did some out-of-this-world feedback sounds on this... he's a strange cat. "You Are My Sunshine" is my Geordie sentimental side coming out – I don't know why I did that, it's not traditional, that's for sure. Some of the songs here are more off the wall. A couple of country songs, like "Walk A Mile In My Shoes". So this consolidated the solo career mainly because of "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes" and "The 'In' Crowd".

"I don't write often, so when I do, it feels special"

BRYAN FERRY



LET'S STICK TOGETHER

EG, 1976

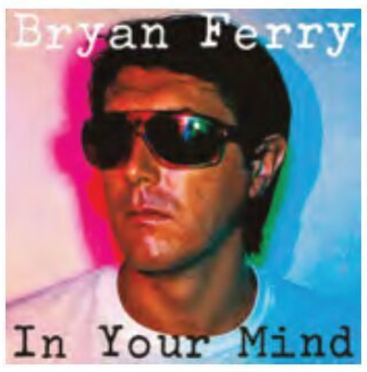
A grab-bag rushed out to capitalise on the title track's success, Ferry's third nonetheless features some classic tracks, including covers of early Roxy songs, alongside some equally classic tailoring...

We recorded the single, "Let's Stick Together", first – I love the original version by Wilbert Harrison, it's much better than the version I did. I love some of those early R'n'B records, quite rough and ready, warm, beautiful records, and I just fancied doing it. We had [*Everly Brothers cover*] "The Price Of Love", too, and a couple of tracks, and I think everybody around me thought, 'Let's see how the single goes, it's going to be a big record.' And I guess it was. So Polydor said, "Please, can we have an album?" So we quickly did these tracks and threw it all together. I covered myself for the first time – I did "Chance Meeting", "2HB", "Re-Make/Re-Model" and "Sea Breezes", all from the first Roxy album, and "Casanova" from *Country Life*. I just thought it would be fun to do them in a different style, in a different way. The same way that in my record collection I have several different versions of Charlie Parker playing the same song in different periods of his career, with different lineups.

We were based in Air Studios in Oxford Circus, which was a great studio. They've got about four different rooms and all of the engineers there were very well-drilled – not quite wearing lab coats, but the next generation on.

Let's Stick Together was the first time I worked with Chris Spedding, who was, and is, a really great guitar player. He played a lovely Flying V guitar. It was all done very quickly, with a great spirit. Jerry Hall did that whooping on "Let's Stick Together" – she appeared in the video, which was also done very quickly. The clothes and set were designed by Antony Price, and it was directed by a friend of mine, Jonathan Benson, who was the assistant director on some of the Monty Python movies, and a very nice man. Yes, it was a good look I had in that video, with the moustache! It was a look I'd seen in many a movie – Clark Gable type of thing.

Movies have always been a big source of inspiration for me, with either songs or just looks. I like the way people looked in old black and white movies – everybody wore a hat and a suit. You'd see people walking down the street and everybody's wearing a hat. It's a terrible shame that people don't anymore.



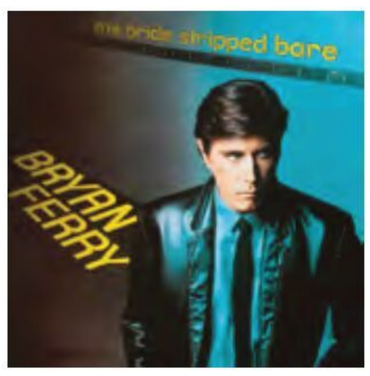
IN YOUR MIND

EG, 1977

With Roxy Music on hiatus, Ferry creates his first solo album of original songs, with more help from Chris Spedding, Phil Manzanera, Paul Thompson and former King Crimson bassist John Wetton.

After *Let's Stick Together*, I went on my first world tour as a solo artist. I think I'd got fed up with being in a band, and wanted to try making an album of original material as a solo artist. I say as a solo artist, but it was more like being in a different band 'cos it wasn't just me on my own with a guitar, or piano. I think this is the first time I worked with strings. There's a great string arrangement on "Love Me Madly Again", which Ann Odell did, which was really beautiful, I think. Once again we did this in Air Studios. I remember the great solo Chris Spedding did on "Love Me Madly Again". I sort of tricked him, because it was one of those songs where it goes from one thing into a whole different mood, a different movement, really – and I just let it go on into the next part of the song, with completely different chords and everything, and he did the most incredible kind of recovery with this solo that was very beautiful! I've always tried to get people's initial responses from a piece of music. So I always like to record the first take, and I remember that was one time when it really paid off. You just get people instinctively responding to the music they're hearing for the first time, and that's very important.

Making *These Foolish Things* at Air Studios, June 1973



THE BRIDE STRIPPED BARE

EG, 1978

Ferry hooks up with LA sessioneers in Switzerland for a confessional, bluesy response to his split with Jerry Hall.

This featured a composite band. Neil Hubbard was one of the two guitarists, and I had met this American guitar player, Waddy Wachtel, when I was writing some of the songs for this record in LA. I met a drummer there, too, Rick Marotta, and I took them over to Switzerland, to this studio near Geneva called Mountain Studios. Ann Odell was the keyboard player as well as me, and Alan Spenner was the crazy bass player. So him and Neil Hubbard were the English guys, and so the friction between them and the two Americans was really exciting. I thought the results were fantastic. I was living out in LA with my friend Simon Puxley, who was a very important person in the making of all these records. He was the man in the background, who was my publicist and Roxy's. He had written the sleevenotes for the first Roxy album, and he became my close friend and confidant. He was a wonderful person. He was like the extra member of the band, and he's sorely missed to this day. There were a lot of things fermenting at that time. I had an assistant working for me who was into punk and he'd play me some of the things that were coming out of England; I was out in LA, absorbing all this American stuff, so I was in a very different headspace, but I did this track "Sign Of The Times", which had a kind of punk feeling to it. It was a way of getting Waddy and Rick to play in this aggressive kind of style.

BOYS AND GIRLS

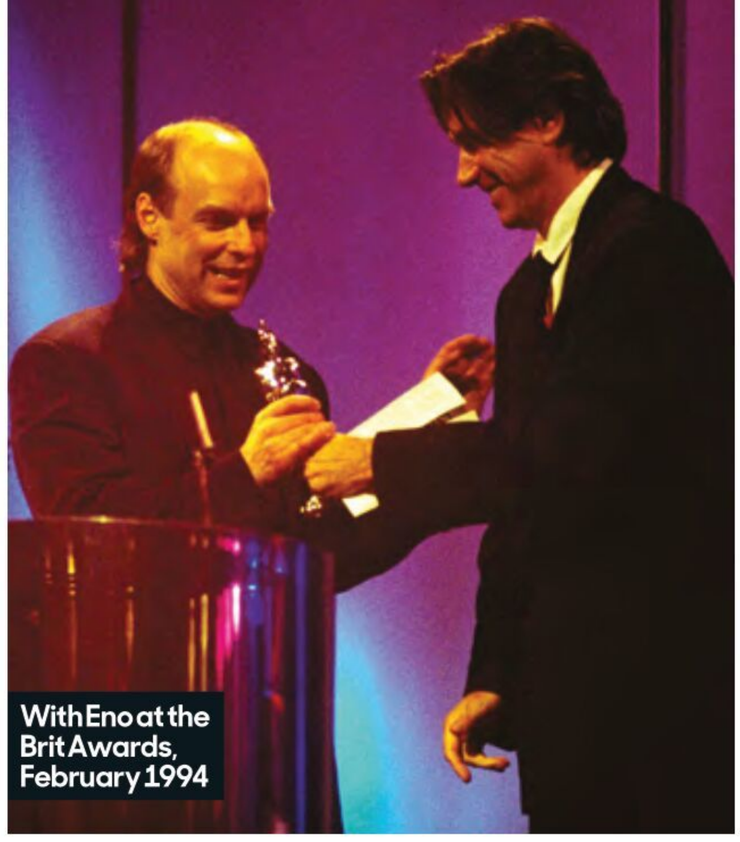
EG, 1985

Following the final Roxy Music album to date, 1982's *Avalon*, Ferry returns with a chart-topping record that still remains a very sophisticated template for his work.

It was a strong album, but it was No 1 mainly because of the single "Slave To Love". It was as simple as that. It just caught the mood, I guess. I had some great people working with me by then. All these great people I'd worked with through all this time, plus new people like Nile Rodgers and Marcus Miller, who also played on *Avonmore* – it was a very important album for me.

IAN DICKSON/REDFERNS

There was a lot of New York in this record. We did some of this in Bette Midler's loft, down in Tribeca. She had an apartment which I rented, and I was living there. We made a studio in one of the rooms. It was great, it felt very fresh and different working in a place like that. David Gilmour, of course, is very good. I worked with him again on Olympia. He's a brilliant player, he's got a real sound. Quite distinctive, and he plays with feeling, it's good. It's very important that they play as if they mean it. From this album on, I'd found a way of working... It wasn't easy, but it just felt sort of special because nobody else took the trouble to spend months putting so many different parts from different players together like that. I was very into kind of sculpting all these different sounds to see what happened, see where it could lead you. You'd create solos which weren't just one guy playing, it would go from one to another, and that's very cool. One of the great moments of rock music is that solo in "Hotel California", where it goes from Don Felder to Joe Walsh and it just changes its mood, a beautiful moment.


With Eno at the Brit Awards, February 1994

Olympic. I went through fortunes, we really set up camp and did a lot of stuff there. It's great to have my own space now, it's perfect for this kind of work. We'll be working on lots of different tracks, especially now you have ProTools, you can just dial them up, and see, "Ah, where are we with this one?" Certain tracks would be left for years to age, in barrels, and you'd go back years later and finish them off. I worked with Brian Eno again on this – that was great. He came here, we worked downstairs, and we actually co-wrote a song. I also went to St Petersburg where he was living. We started that there and I finished it off here. *Mamouna* was great, it had some good things on it – it wasn't terribly successful, but it has a great mood to it, I think. There are certain people you like working with, and yes, this had loads of people on it – including Carleen Anderson, who's a very good singer. Chester Kamen, Guy Pratt, all these English lads.

"Certain tracks would be left for years to age, in barrels"
BRYAN FERRY

MAMOUNA
VIRGIN, 1994

'Comped' to perfection, this sumptuous album featured a co-writing credit with Brian Eno...

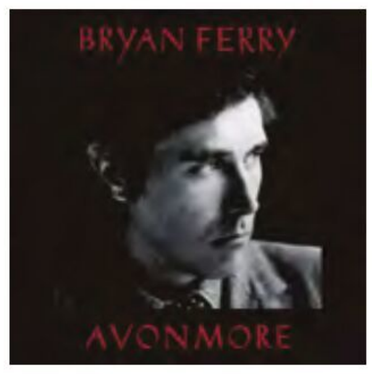
Taxi and *Mamouna* were done mainly here [*at Avonmore*], and in Olympic in Barnes, which was another really good studio. I spent ages in

With Johnny Marr, making "The Right Stuff" video, Paris, September 1987

OLYMPIA
VIRGIN/ ASTRALWERKS, 2010

The first collection of Ferry's own songs since 2002's *Frantic*, *Olympia* featured Kate Moss on the cover and a huge number of guest guitarists...

My songs go through a lot of stages, if I get fed up with how one sounds I just take it off in a different direction. "You Can Dance" was rockabilly originally. Sometimes somebody will play something and you go, 'Ah', it shows you another way the song can go. Songs are very important to me, having a good melody. Melody is what I'm best at. Do I rewrite my lyrics? Sometimes I'll change the odd word, but by the time I bring it in to sing, I'll have it more or less what I want it to be. Sometimes it takes forever, and if it doesn't seem like the right lyric is coming, then I'll just wait and go back to it the following year. I got in contact with Jonny Greenwood to see if he wanted to play – I thought he was a very good player, very experimental, lots of different sounds, musically very adept, the real deal. Johnny Marr, obviously, is another great English guitar player. I worked with him first of all at Air Studios, on a couple of things, "The Right Stuff" on *Bête Noire*. I met him because John Porter produced The Smiths on their first LP. We wrote a song together on *Avonmore*, and he's terrific, he's got better and better. Very versatile. He's a great fan of Nile Rodgers, too, so it's funny having them on the same tracks.



AVONMORE
BMG, 2014

After 2012's curio, *The Jazz Age*, Bryan reacts with his most uptempo set of songs in decades...

The Jazz Age didn't really influence this, other than that I wanted to make a record very different from it. It's nice veering from one direction to the other with records that follow each other. A lot of care goes into the making, especially now, as you're thinking, 'How many more records will I make?' So you don't want to put it out unless you think it achieves something. It's nice to think you're getting better at things. The more uptempo feel here is down to the fact I'd been doing so much live work the past few years, and festivals and stuff, where you're conscious of everyone playing very fast songs. I felt I needed more fast songs in my repertoire, that's for sure. *Avonmore* was going to be all original, but I had a couple of covers I thought made it a bit more expansive. "Send In The Clowns" is such a classic showbusiness song, and I like the strings on it that I did with Colin Good. "Johnny & Mary" had such a different sound to the others, too. I did that with Todd Terje, who's very talented and it added a new dimension to the record. There's still a lot of comping involved. You want to get that person to do what they do best – with Nile, it's beautiful rhythm parts. On the odd occasion he bursts into a solo, we say, "No!", or let him go for a bit 'til he blows himself out... All these people I work with are clever, they're not show-offs. It's a treat to work with people of that quality or skill. ✪

REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

European son: live at Tempodrom, Berlin, Sep 25, 2015

STEFANHOEDERATH/REDFERNS

THE SOLO ALBUMS

ENO 2000s

RELEASED: 2005-2022

Ship happens. Finding the human footprint amid the grand installations: Eno's epic – in fact infinite – 21st-century music.

BY JOHN ROBINSON

IN 1972, around the time when they were thinking about *The Dark Side Of The Moon*, the Pink Floyd were facing a lot of criticism about their use of machinery. In fact, their harshest critics contended, with all the electronic jiggery-pokery they used on stage, what exactly was the point of the band at all? Maybe they could just go off and do something else and let the machines get on with it.

A couple of years later, Brian Eno had started to ask some fairly similar philosophical questions of his music. While Roger Waters and the Floyd were outraged at the idea of the machines running the show, Eno found it a liberating one, and began pursuing an "infinite music", a system of melodic elements which would subtly change and interact – but never repeat.

As he explained at a 2018 lecture at the British Library, the first fruit of the idea was *Discreet Music* in 1975. In the 21st century, he explained, the technology has evolved to the point where he and his laptop can set in motion many such varying elements, casting them gently like paper boats on time's endless river, and have them never repeat. Nice to listen to? Certainly. But also democratic. This, Eno explained, is music which the listener has effectively created – simply by listening to it at that never-to-be repeated moment in time. It also inverts the 'top down' hierarchy by which church, state and music (even Pink Floyd's) had traditionally worked.

Anyone seeing the range of his collaborations will know that Eno is a people person – a lovely recent record has been 2020's *Mixing Colours*, a work credited to Roger Eno and Brian Eno, for example. With the chimes and reverberations that characterise the infinite music he has made in the 2000s, though, it feels that he's arrived at a real musical/humanist breakthrough. It doesn't sound jarringly different from what he made in the 1970s and 1980s, it's true, but the times are undoubtedly right for music which privileges contemplation and finds a place for individual experience.

Eno's British Library talk was convened to launch his mammoth *Music For Installations*. Whether you own the boxset whopper or hear it more democratically on YouTube, you can spend a happy five hours in the shade of a set collecting (chiefly) 21st-century commissioned work for galleries, airports and assorted cultural spectacles.

From the *Wish You Were Here*-style whooshing of "Kazakhstan" to the sprightlier, sub-Aphex sketches like "Light Legs" (first made generally available when Eno curated the Brighton Festival in 2010), there's variety here but also a strong intimation of something fairly ominous. The four 18- and 19-minute pieces on 2012's *Lux* also originate from the marble colonnades of high culture, being commissioned for the Great Gallery of the Palace Venaria in Turin. Conceptually and tonally, it's all about light. With its infinite guitars, piano chording and fret squeak, it's also tied to the human and organic like no record since *Music For Airports*.

"LUX 2" hints at drama, but still nothing like that we find in *Music For Installations*. On the awesome 45 minutes that is "77 Million Paintings", we enter a reverberating space heavy with Kubrickian menace. Amid machine throb and strange air currents, we hear distorted human voices, and overhead electronic sorties into an unfathomably large space. Warm clusters of notes can be heard intermittently like ringing bells, not so much to suggest passing time as to send out a message to anyone who might still be around to hear it.

Eno's infinite music brings with it infinite unique responses –

CRITICS' VERDICTS

ANOTHER DAY ON EARTH
"A series of unfailingly sweet, subdued pieces that revisit a few of his old motifs. Exceedingly pleasant, if hardly groundbreaking."
David Stubbs, Uncut, August 2005

LUX
"Traditional ambient buzzwords like 'lunar' and 'sepulchral' are drawn inexorably to these suspended notes and minutely fluctuating soundscapes."
John Mulvey, Uncut, December 2012

delight in the experience; a nostalgia for a moment which won't occur again – but a record like *The Ship* focuses these musical and conceptual elements into a record of solemnity, humanity and power. Released 104 years after the *Titanic* disaster, the sinking of a supposedly 'unsinkable' commercial liner at the height of British Empirical hubris, and a century on from the height of the First World War, *The Ship* is full of ominous reverberating spaces, and alive with tolling bells.

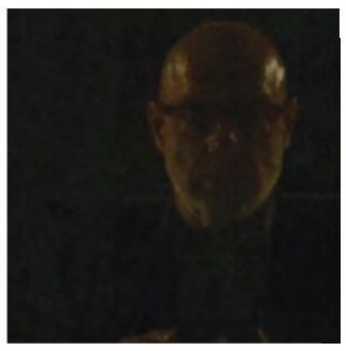
There are voices, but rather than being as distorted as we have heard them elsewhere, they encourage close attention, as if their testimony should not be missed. The Enophile will be reminded of *The Sinking Of The Titanic*, a work by Gavin Bryars released on Eno's Obscure label around the time of *Discreet Music*. There, audio testimony from *Titanic* survivors was mixed into an inexorably rising swell of strings, finally submerging them in a work which pondered human dignity, amid the complacency of the ruling elites.

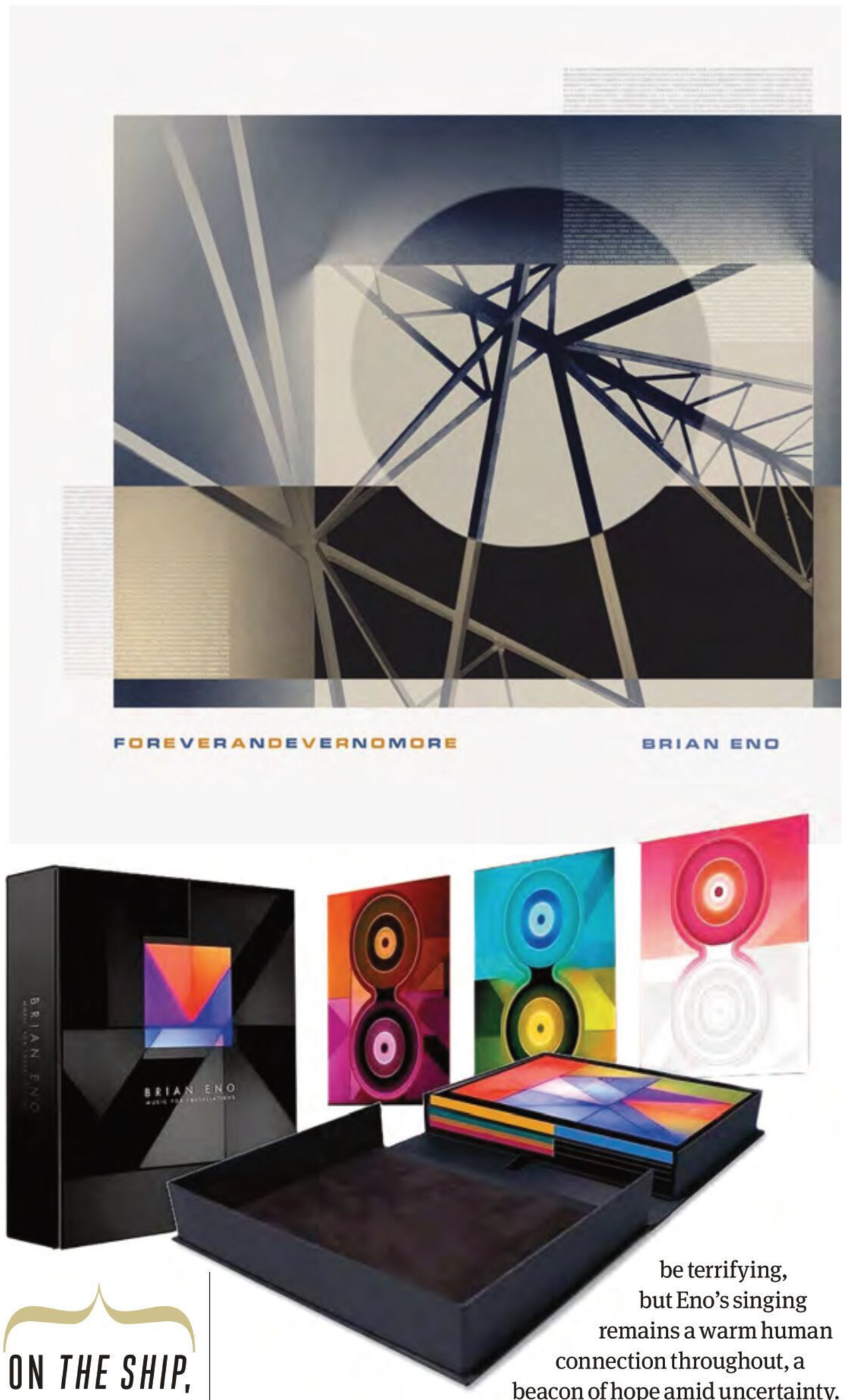
On *The Ship*, we are bowled over by Eno's own voice, singing an installation-scale folk song. On the 20-minute title track, good omens for the voyage very quickly turn bad. When they do, Eno intones solemnly, nearly getting to a low C: *"The sky is black with crows..."* As the song element finishes, we focus in on a frail voice testifying an impressionistic poem. It's awesome.

You can get the booming *Reflection* as an app, which will adjust the music at different times of day, and to seasonal changes. It's apparently been devised by Eno as a musical/psychological place to help you think. The one I've got is the "Autumn update", which is very nice, alive with wobbly sustain and tolling bells, but what it basically sounds like is *The Ship* but with the ship taken out.

The Ship is a genuine classic: an epic, serious and reflective album – as befits a collection recorded in the wake of the deaths of David Bowie and Lou Reed. It also sounds like a place where everything (a Peter Serafinowicz collaboration; a version of The Velvet Undergound's "I'm Set Free", the idea of a futuristic record which looked back to the past) simply came together. Amid the deep reverb and drama, Eno's return to singing was particularly welcomed.

In its submerged melodies, deep reverb and strong empathy, 2022's *Foreverandevernomore* is a close cousin to *The Ship*. While the earlier record is subtly and movingly political, the new one directly confronts an inequitable world, and what Eno calls our "precarious future". The noises, as on "Garden Of Stars", can be terrifying, but Eno's singing remains a warm human connection throughout, a beacon of hope amid uncertainty.





ON *THE SHIP*, WE ARE BOWLED OVER BY ENO'S OWN VOICE, SINGING AN INSTALLATION-SCALE FOLK SONG

As anyone who heard 2005's *Another Day On Earth* can tell you, though, Eno returned to singing a while before *The Ship*. A work of many hands, here everyone from David Bowie to Annie Lennox and ecologist Stewart Brand is involved with the album somewhere, playing or collaborating or advising.

An album of what you'd have to call ambient pop, melody is strong, and the concept – the continuity of existence across humanity – is a fair one. The arrangements haven't all dated well, but the likes of "Going Unconscious" hint in miniature at the grander architecture which would come a decade later, though it doesn't work half as well.

And as such, it's a completely consistent part of Eno's work this century. There's nothing wrong with the ideas. It's just that the software hasn't quite caught up yet.

TRACKMARKS

ANOTHER DAY ON EARTH ★★★
Label: Opal, 2005
Produced by: Brian Eno
Recorded at: Wilderness Studio, Suffolk
Highest chart position: UK 75; US –

LUX ★★★★
Label: Warp, 2012
Produced by: Brian Eno
Recorded at: various locations
Highest chart position: UK 77; US –

THE SHIP ★★★★★
Label: Warp, 2016
Produced by: Brian Eno; Peter Chilvers
Recorded at: various locations
Highest chart position: UK 28; US 175

REFLECTION ★★★★
Label: Warp, 2017
Produced by: Brian Eno
Recorded at: various locations
Highest chart position: UK 78; US –

MUSIC FOR INSTALLATIONS ★★★★
Label: Astralwerks, 2018
Produced by: Brian Eno
Recorded at: various locations
Highest chart position: UK –; US –

MIXING COLOURS ★★★
Label: Deutsche Grammophon, 2020
Produced by: Roger Eno and Brian Eno
Recorded at: Eno's studio
Highest chart position: UK –; US –

FOREVERANDEVER NOMORE ★★★★
Label: Opal/Umc, 2022
Produced by: Brian Eno
Recorded at: Eno's studio
Highest chart position: UK –; US –

"A club of one"

BRIAN ENO reveals a magnificent new album, *The Ship*. While sounding its depths, he makes a rare trip with MICHAEL BONNER to his past, including his work with David Bowie and Lou Reed. "There are a lot of artists I like and get on well with," he says.

"I THINK the interesting thing, looking back on your work, is that you realise you could never do it again," says Brian Eno. "There's was ballet at Sadler's Wells last week by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker that's based around one of my songs, 'Golden Hours' from *Another Green World*. When I listen to that song again, I think, 'Jesus, I would never do that now.' I could not leave that in that condition. You can hear I'm doing all the percussion myself with sticks on a desk and it's completely chaotic. It's so badly played but actually that is the character of the piece. I just wouldn't make it now like that."

Eno is sitting at a large circular wooden table in the middle of his west London studio. He nibbles thoughtfully at a croissant while in front of him, a pot of tea slowly cools. It is, he decided earlier, "a four-bag morning". Eno bulk buys his tea – as a consequence, boxes of Palanquin Red Bush Spiced are stacked neatly in a cube in a corner of his studio's kitchen area. Ostensibly, we are here to talk about his superb new album, *The Ship* – a weighty, ruminative record that draws inspiration from the First World War and the *Titanic* disaster. It also contains a revelatory cover of The Velvet Underground 's "I'm Set Free" that has, it transpires, been over a decade in the making. To coincide with its release, there are several installations planned and – next – Eno reveals he is planning a new collaboration with David Byrne. Although talking to Eno requires across-the-board thinking, today he obligingly discusses more than just the project at hand, including previous career highs, his working relationship with his late friend David Bowie and his views on some of his other storied collaborators.

"I don't always like records when I finish them"
BRIAN ENO

Located in a cobbled mews close to Portobello Road, Eno's studio is airy and open-plan, with whitewashed walls and skylights. Close to the front door stands a set of floor-to-ceiling bookshelves. There are volumes by Antony Beevor, Alexis de Tocqueville and Richard Dawkins. A biography of Ghenghis Khan sits near to Billy Childish's poetry collection *The Man With The Gallows Eyes*. Eno's BAFTA for the Channel 4 series *Top Boy* nestles on the same shelf as Bill Drummond's *17* and David Byrne's *How Music Works*. Fixed on a wall adjacent to the bookshelves are several shelves of DVDs and CDs, including Eno's own vocal and instrumental boxsets from 1993. Below these, a

SHAMIL TANNA

turntable rests on freestanding metal shelves packed with vinyl, divided alphabetically by strips of cardboard. On the floor, a copy of Sly & The Family Stone 's *Fresh* lies next to an album by the Ensemble Of The Bulgarian Republic.

A grey filing cabinet and a dark brown sofa mark the start of the studio area itself. A whiteboard acts as Eno's de facto diary, with his activities for March drawn in red felt pen. A letter from the V&A is attached to a radiator by a round red magnet. White cubes of different sizes sit on various surfaces: originating from a previous exhibition, these are light boxes built around concealed colour monitors that gradually alter the intensity and hue of light. Eno points towards a clock hanging on the wall. "It's a one-year clock," he explains. "There's one revolution in a year. So we're at quarter past the year now. Did you realise that? Isn't that amazing?"

Eno's latest paintings – in gaudy, bright colours – sit on a table. "I started doing those fluorescent ones because an art shop up the road has just closed down," he says. "They were selling off fluorescent paints very cheap, so I bought some." Towards the rear of the room is his studio space. Two giant Mac displays rest on a table, flanking a solitary synthesiser. Bundles of wires project from various mixers and other discreet-looking pieces of tech. Behind them, a sleek, metallic mic is fixed to its stand. Eager to demonstrate a new software package, Eno turns on the keyboard. "One of the things I like is the possibility of tuning different scales," he begins playing a series of notes that he then manipulates through a program. So far, so very Eno.

Dressed today in dark jeans, a shirt and coat, Eno's blue eyes sparkle behind his glasses. He is warm and often very funny in conversation; though very specific, too. At one point, he breaks our interview off to demonstrate the Markov Chain Generator software that helped create "The Hour Is Thin", a poem read by Peter Serafinowicz that appears on *The Ship*. "I won't debit the interview," he insists.

Later, he disappears into the toilet. There, he begins singing Al Green 's "How Can You Mend A Broken Heart" in full voice. Emerging, he smiles. "I'm thinking of doing it tonight with my a cappella group, if I can find the lyrics..."

How do you normally feel at the end of a project like this? Are you happy with this record?

You don't always like records when you finish them. Sometimes you think, 'I just want to not bloody hear it again for a long time.' Especially records you've worked on for a long time. Productions that I worked on for a year or two years, by the end, you're really sick of it. It's like cooking. When you're cooking something elaborate, you're hours smelling the thing. By the time it's done, you don't want to eat."

What was the catalyst for *The Ship*?

It started with a request from a Swedish electronic music studio, Fylkingen, to make a sound installation for them. They said, "We've got lots of channels of sound. So if you want to make it 16 channels, we can do it." I started out making a piece of music which was only music, no voices. I did it in here, actually, because I have lots of speakers here of all different kinds stuck up in various places. The piece was in C and to my surprise one evening I found that I could sing a low C, which I've never been able to do before. It's a consequence of getting older. As you get older, your voice adds some range at the bottom and loses quite a lot more at the top. I had a new mic, which seemed to flatter that sound. So I started singing, just sounds at first. It was nice, having a voice in this piece. Putting together an ambient piece with something like a song was something I'd never done before.

It's good to hear you singing again. I heard you sing live at Damon Albarn's gig at the Albert Hall in November, 2014.

That was a very interesting experience for me. I didn't do a warm-up. I was sitting down in the back, reading, while the show was going on. I knew I was the last song [*"Heavy Seas Of Love"*], but when the time came, I thought, 'Christ, I suppose I should have warmed up.' I just walked on and this voice came out of me that was so unexpectedly confident.

When was the last time you'd sung on stage at a rock gig prior to that?

Oh, blimey. It's a long time. I think with Rachid Taha [*Stop The War benefit concert; November 2005*].

How did you get Peter Serafinowicz involved for "The Hour Is Thin"?

I put in a description of seeing the *Titanic* go down from one of the lifeboats into the Markov Generator. I took quite a lot of pornographic songs from the First World War. Soldiers used to take

Dane lore: Eno in Copenhagen, 1974

JORGEN ANGEL/REDFERNS

music hall songs and change the words so they were very, very dirty. I put some of those in. Having done it, I was sitting at this table, and I thought, 'What voice would this be?' Peter Serafinowicz! I rang him up, and he said, 'Oh, I'm just round the corner actually.' He came in and had read that within 20 minutes of it being finished. It was fantastic.

The First World War was the first mechanised war, while *The Titanic* was meant to be state of the art. Are you saying that you're anti-technology, or is this a way of emphasising how pro-human you are?
I'm certainly not anti-technology. Technology is the way we extend our senses and our reach. Incidentally, technology is the only way I could possibly have ever been a musician! No, it's to do with noticing a pattern that keeps repeating the connection between power and vulnerability – or power and paranoia, shall we say. *The Titanic* and the First World War both represent a point at which empires had reached a level of hubris and arrogance and confidence that made them think that they could do anything and they would succeed at it. You can see it most recently in America after 9/11, where you had a country that felt that its power was not only stable and permanent but also historically inevitable. The whole project was in ruins; and further ruined by the invasion of Iraq. So that to me is a direct parallel to the First World War, where these empires had reached a state of stability and scale and security – just like *The Titanic*. They all thought they were unsinkable, and they sunk. Four empires disappeared during the First World War.

"I've been a whole series of different people"
BRIAN ENO

***The Ship* is a loosely themed concept album, like *Taking Tiger Mountain (By Strategy)*.**
How do you view those early albums now?
When I listen back to those things, it makes me realise that we aren't one person. We get this impression that here's Brian Eno and he's been this person for all that time. But actually it hasn't. It's been a whole series of different people. I can hear that Brian Eno from 1974 and think, 'Christ, that really was a different person.' Some things of course remain the same, but it's a very tenuous connection between the me of now and the me of then. Much more tenuous than people usually admit to. We're natural storytellers and we tell our own story as if it happened logically, with cause and effect. But it's not like that at all. We're constantly modifying the story to try to accommodate the weird swerves we make in different directions. There comes a point where the embarrassment passes and you just accept this is another person. Then it becomes quite interesting as you think, 'Oh, yeah. I don't mind that person. It's just not the one I thought it was.'

Do you see any parallels between this album and Gavin Bryars' *The Sinking Of The Titanic*?
No. Of course, I know that piece very well. I love that piece, actually. I produced the recording of it. In fact, I really started a record label [*Obscure*] in order to release that album. It was that piece, and on the other side was a piece called "Jesus Blood".

How did you round up these people on Obscure? Bryars, Michael Nyman, Harold Budd, David Toop, Penguin Café Orchestra. They weren't well recorded...
When I was at art college, I was very connected to what was then called the experimental music scene. I knew a lot of those people then. Gavin. Michael Nyman. Tom Phillips. I didn't know David Toop then. John Tilbury, the piano player. I had also met Morton Feldman, Christian Wolfe, Earle Brown. This music scene was tiny. There were about 31 people in it! You'd go to concerts and it would always be the same group of people, we all knew each other. But a lot of these scenes are very, very small. I knew some of the Fluxus people in New York. I always assumed that I knew just a little bit and it was all over the place. But it turned out I knew most of the Fluxus people, because there were very few of them.
So one of the things I was very keen on was trying to make some kind of communication between what I saw happening in pop music – in particular, The Velvet Underground, The Who and some of the psychedelic groups – and what was going on in experimental music. I thought there was such a lot of possible friction and sparks could fly. Apart from anything else, I just wanted to introduce that catalogue of possibilities into the public view, as it were.

WARING ABBOTT/GETTY IMAGES

On stage with Roxy Music, 1972

Reel sounds: Eno in his home studio, London 1974

ERICA ECHENBERG/REDFERNS

Your own Obscure release, *Discreet Music*, came out in 1975, months apart from Lou Reed's *Metal Machine Music*. What are the points of comparison between those records?

They were two ends of a spectrum of possibilities that not many other people had explored then. There had been a group of composers who had been experimenting with immersion of some kind. Steve Reich was one, but another very important one who you don't hear very much about is Charlemagne Palestine, who was a pianist. He used to give these concerts in his loft in New York where he'd sit at his beautiful grand piano and he'd start playing on the same chord and he'd go on and on and on and it would get louder and louder and louder until the whole place rang with this sound. It was an amazing experience. La Monte Young had an installation that used a military specification signals generator and huge amplifiers and produced a pure sine tone at a particular frequency for six months. In concert, The Velvet Underground would sometimes play incredibly long versions of their songs where they're staying in one sound world, holding it and getting louder and louder and louder – like La Monte Yong. In my case, I wanted to be able to create not just pieces of music but systems to create pieces of music. I used to call them machines, which is funny because of Lou's *Metal Machine Music*. But I got the word machine from the English composer John White. *Discreet Music* is the first piece of machine music that I made. It could be infinity-long that piece. It was the length it was because that was the most I could get onto one side of vinyl. Once you set it going, it could keep generating itself. It could still be playing now.

"Craft is not the issue. Ideas are the issue"

BRIAN ENO

Why did you decide to cover "I'm Set Free"?

I recorded it 12 or 13 years ago, but I changed a little bit for this final version. I've always loved the song. It has so many elements of song writing I like, not many chords! Nearly all the songs I really, really like, when I look at them closely, they're three or four chords. There's usually a very interesting distribution of the chords. One of the chords on "I'm Set Free", if it's a 32-bar sequence, occurs for one bar. It's the real oddity in the thing.

The third Velvet Underground album is one of your favourites, isn't it?

It's one of my big albums, I guess. It made a huge impact on me and it has done ever since. They broke so many rules. Look what it did with drumming! Instead of having a hairy guy hitting a big drum kit, there's a girl with one drum and she plays the simplest things. You have Lou, who was an enthusiastic but not great guitar player. I thought, 'Wow, I can probably play like that.' Sterling was fantastic; a very lyrical player. Early on, you had John playing viola. John had worked with La Monte Young, so had Lou. That band represented a convergence of a lot of thoughts. At that time, I was playing with the Scratch Orchestra and the whole subtext of that is that art students were the best musicians because they didn't know how to play things, they were more likely to make original choices. Nearly all of the Scratch Orchestra was art students and nearly all of the Portsmouth Sinfonia was art students as well. So these foundational institutions from that time were people who'd come through an education that said, in a way, craft is not the issue. Ideas are the issue. Approaches, processes.

Talking of art students, here's your Winchester School Of Art report from 1967. "A promising student. Difficult to pin down to work. Hampered by intellectual considerations, but certainly worth the effort made for him." Does that still apply, do you think?

That still applies! There was also something else going on which is not talked about any more. Social mobility. Post-war, for the first time ever in English history, suddenly it was possible for working-class kids to appear within these scenes. They brought in different experiences and different sensibilities. Pop music was one of them. That didn't come from Eton and it didn't come from Oxford and Cambridge. That came from kids on housing estates. It was their music and they took it into the art colleges, and it came back out of the art colleges with a new vigour and a lot of new ideas added in to it. The Who is a very good example. That was in this period that is now referred to by economists as the 'golden age of capitalism'. At the end of the Second World War, people were not interested in empire militarism – they were rejecting it. But otherwise governments were looking at Russia and saying, 'Jesus, look what these Communists are giving people. Free education, free health care.' They were worried about revolution, I think, in England or in the

With David Byrne, in a recording studio in Mexico, 1980

western countries. There was a very clear effort by governments in Western Europe to say, 'We've got to be presenting the people with something that is a decent option. We have to make things look a little better.' It stayed that way until Thatcher and Reagan, when the elites clawed back their *droit du seigneur* and took everything back and continued to do so and still do continue to do so.

I saw you during last year's London Film Festival. You admitted to experiencing a "nostalgic glow" around some of the music you made during the 1970s...
That doesn't happen very often!

Exactly! I wondered what prompted it.
Can you remember what I was referring to in particular?

Yes, you'd recently found the tracking sheets for *Taking Tiger Mountain*.
Oh, yes. That was nostalgia more for a way of working and the total naivety I had at the time. When I look at those sheets, they're hilarious. We were working on 16 track machines at that point. '16 tracks!', I thought. 'Bloody hell, that's pretty generous!' Quite often, you'll see the track sheet and there's only seven tracks used. Now it is almost totally inconceivable these days that anybody would ever stop at seven tracks. It just doesn't happen. Even if it's a guy playing solo guitar, he'll want a close mic and a faraway mic and a pick-up. All this bollocks.

There's a story about recording "Needle In The Camel's Eye". You had Phil Manzanera playing the same rhythm line four times and you were hitting his guitar...
I was banging his whammy-bar, beating it in rhythm. We did three or four tracks of him and I doing exactly the same thing, so you're getting four rippling guitars pulsing against one another.

It's terrifically Heath-Robinson! What those tracking sheets and that Manzanera story demonstrate is how one can apply oneself physically; it's a more tactile experience. That's important. It's one of the things people very easily lose when the get into the computer. It encourages you to stay in that world. Once you're in there, it's all very comfortable. You can connect it together virtually. To actually plug in an instrument, is clumsy by comparison. An instrument seems very primitive. So I keep having to push myself out of that box. There's a lot in there I like and know how to use and can do interesting things with. But I keep having to remind myself, when I like making music it's when it comes from my whole body, not just my finger. That's why I stand up when I work. You do everything differently standing up than sitting down.

The Markov Chain Generator software reminds me a little of the Verbasizer programme you and Bowie used on *Outside*.
The point about these things is they're pushing you somewhere your taste wouldn't take you. A lot of the projects I enjoy – and David enjoyed – was to try to put yourself somewhere you wouldn't slide into intuitively, that you wouldn't comfortably reach. Then just try to see what it's like. What happens if I'm there? What does that mean to be in that place? What David was doing was a kind of cut-up thing, like Burroughs, Brion Gysin and so on used to do. See? We all come out of experimental art. He would cut up his bits and pieces that he'd found from books and so on, put them together in various ways – throw them together – and just take the bits he liked.

Is there a thread that links your collaborators like Bowie, Bryars, Byrne, Fripp, Cale...
It's standing outside of music in some way. Looking at it and seeing it not only as something you love and you're passionately engaged with but as a set of experiments you could do in other ways. If you broadly divide musicians up, you have the kind who are so into a style that's what they do – nothing wrong with that, they're great players. Fripp, by contrast, is someone who sits outside music and thinks, 'You could do it differently. You could have a kind of music that goes like this...' So he invents some new, strange and very hard for most other people to play music style. John Cale is like that as well. And I'm like that.

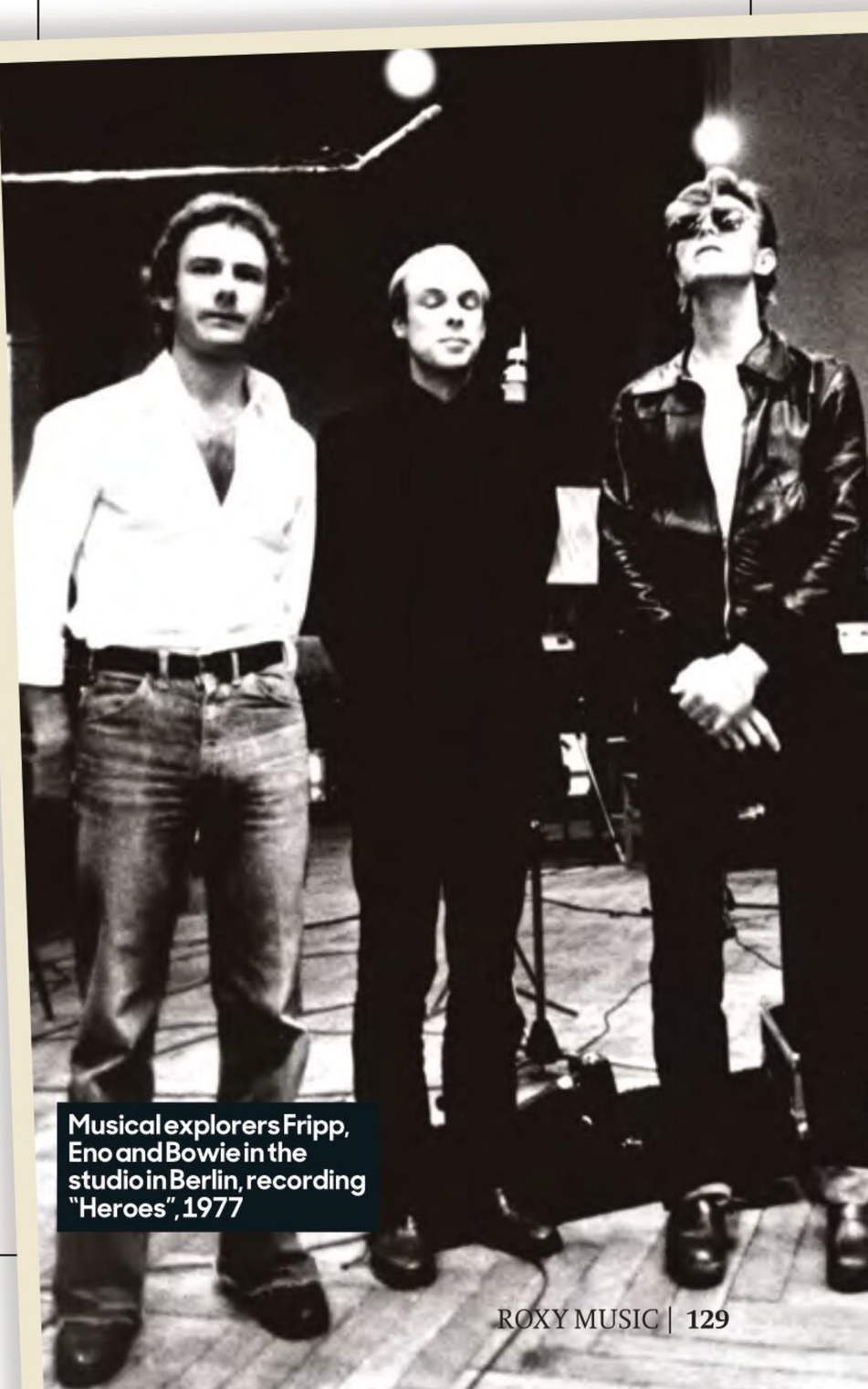
What was the nature of your relationship with Bowie?
We got on well, I think, because we were both interested in that kind of experiment. It isn't to say that makes for a superior musician, or anything like that. It isn't to do with superiority. It's to do with what you're making music for, what your intentions are, what do you want to find from music? I think what David wanted to find – and what I like finding – was other ways of approaching the problem of how you make decisions. How do I arrive at decisions? Do I do it entirely by intuition; that feels nice, that feels right. That's not a bad way but it doesn't always lead you anywhere. Sometimes you have to break out of that intuition circle.

With Lou and David no longer with us, who do you consider your peers?
That's a difficult question. I didn't really even see them as my peers. Well, David more than Lou. I've never really felt I had close kinship with any other artist. There are a lot of artists I like and get on well with. Part of the thing is I don't just do music. My closest friendships are with Jon Hassell, who is somebody who I would say I've had a long intellectual connection with, but I don't make the same music as him, and Danny Hillis, who's a scientist. I've always thought how wonderful it would be to belong to a group like Der Blaue Reiter or Le Six, those artistic groups, the Dadaists, the Suprematists. There isn't a thing that I can belong to at the moment.

Apart from your intrinsic Brian Enoness?
But that's a club of one!

You said there have been many Brian Enos down the years. Maybe you could find a way to gather them all together?
Yes! Get somebody to be the Brian Eno of 1975, and someone else to be 1980...

LYNN GOLDSMITH/GETTY IMAGES; MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES


Musical explorers Fripp, Eno and Bowie in the studio in Berlin, recording "Heroes", 1977

ROXY MUSIC

LIVES AND COMPS

RELEASED: 1976 – 2011

Remade, remodelled, occasionally reconciled. How the intermission between the two halves of Roxy Music's career gave rise to releases aiming to bridge the gap between them. **BY PETER WATTS**

WHEN Roxy Music went on hiatus for the first time in 1976, it created an opportunity. With no new studio album on the immediate horizon, Island were able to start working through the back catalogue and the label almost immediately released two albums – a live LP and a greatest hits – that kept Roxy in the shops while the band were taking a break. Neither of these were throwaway items either. The live album, **VIVA!** **ISLAND, 1976** ★★★★★, has a deservedly high place in many a list of favourite Roxy albums, while **GREATEST HITS** **POLYDOR, 1977** ★★★★ is a studious first draft of Roxy's highlights that may still appeal to those who prefer quirky early Roxy to the more sensible Roxy of the post-reformation era.

Viva! is not only Roxy's first live album, it's also their only essential one. Rather than focus on a single concert, the band selected a variety of tracks from three shows over three years – Glasgow in November 1973, Newcastle in October 1974 and Wembley in October 1975. These were then tied together by Chris Thomas to give the feel of a single show. This was no mean feat given the gigs featured three different bassists, and the success of the album is a testament to the consistency of the band's approach despite the changing personnel as well as Thomas's own familiarity with the material.

VIVA! IS NOT ONLY ROXY'S FIRST LIVE ALBUM, IT'S THEIR ONLY ESSENTIAL ONE

It's a single album rather than the more logical double, and that brevity condenses an awful lot of energy into a fairly short amount of space, creating an album that bristles with a sort of malevolent glee. Take "The Bogus Man", always a weird song in a quirky way, but which on *Viva!* comes with a psychotic glint that is much more fun. Equally unhinged is the fab take on "Both Ends Burning", while the versions of "If There Is Something" and "In Every Dream Home A Heartache" exaggerate the Gothic grandiosity that surely inspired the likes of Siouxsie & The Banshees and The Damned. Many of these takes surpass the studio versions – or at least offer a genuine alternative.

Most of the best tracks were recorded with touring bassist John Wetton, whose partnership with Paul Thompson provides something more than just a platform for the theatrics of Ferry, Mackay and Manzanera. Phil Jobson's contributions on electric violin – most noticeably on opener "Out Of The Blue" – are also delightful, and Wetton and Jobson collectively emphasise Roxy's prog elements, without inhibiting the poppy momentum.

The tracklist was decided by consensus, which is one reason it's a single album rather than double – the band members couldn't agree on enough tracks to fill four sides. That also ensures a high standard of material, and while it's always tempting to ask for more, there's something be said for the way *Viva!* leaves the listener begging for a further fix.

That came in short order with *Greatest Hits*, which

ViVA! Roxy Music

MORE
THAN THIS
THE BEST OF
BRYAN FERRY + ROXY MUSIC

ROXY MUSIC
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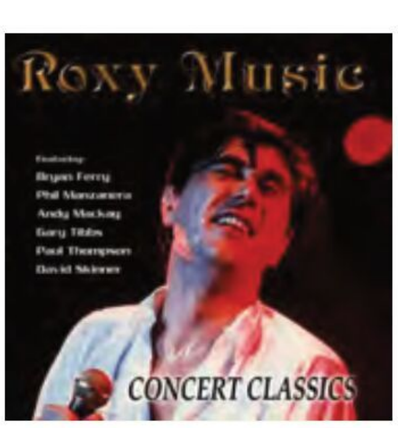
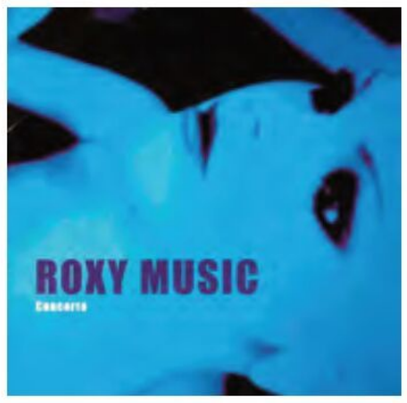
VIRGINIA PLAIN
DO THE STRAND
ALL I WANT IS YOU
OUT OF THE BLUE
PYJAMARAMA
EDITIONS OF YOU
GREATEST HITS


Roxy Music
CONCERT CLASSICS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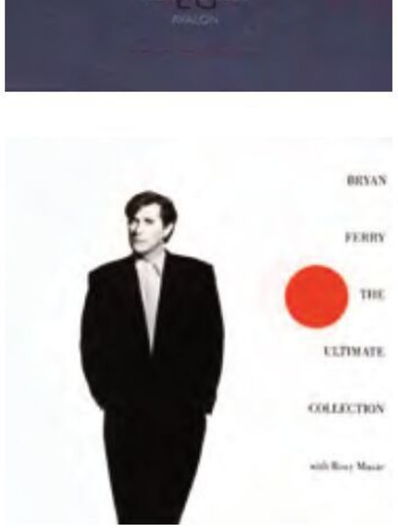
BRYAN
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THE
ULTIMATE
COLLECTION

ROXY
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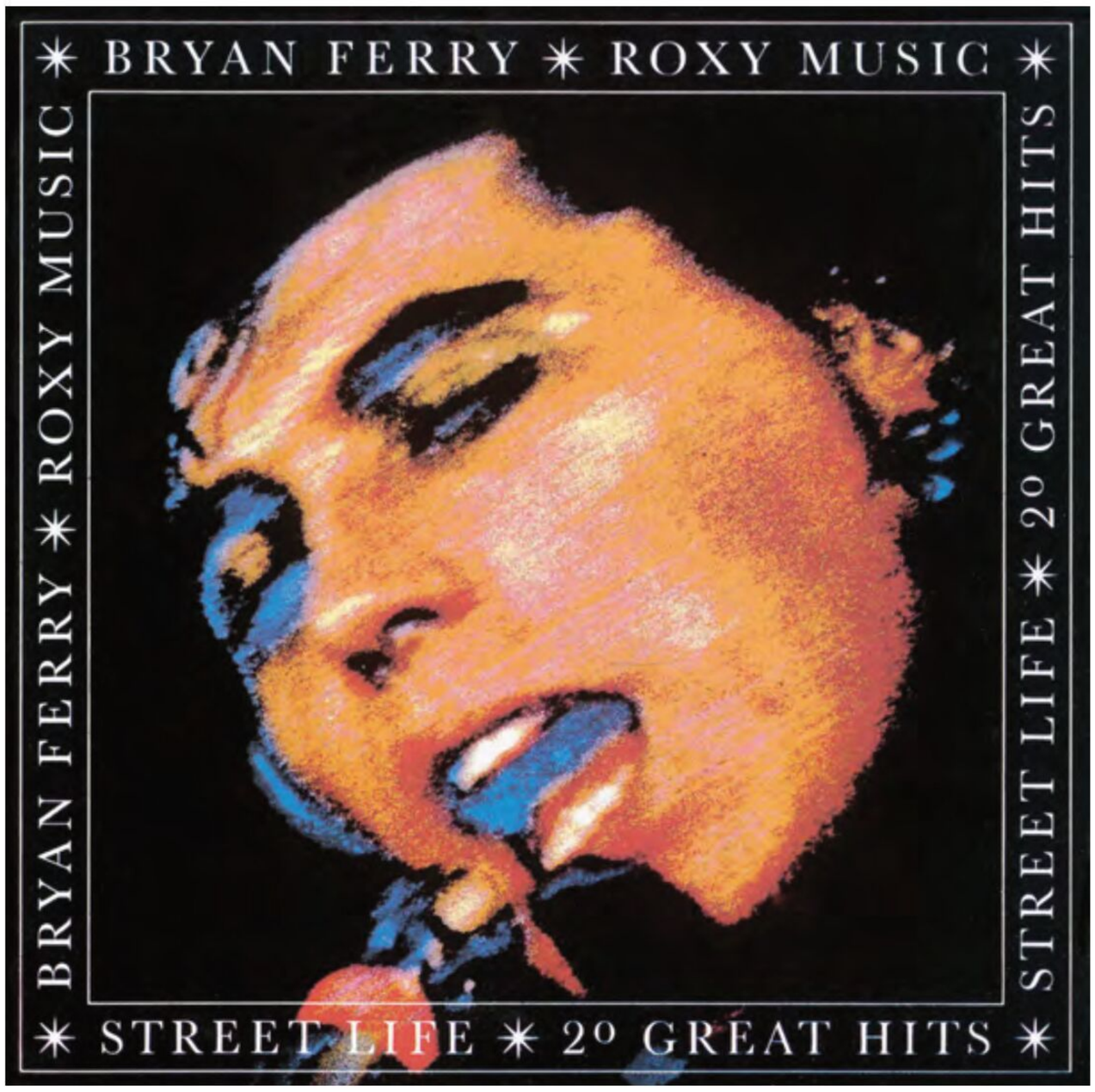
THE THRILL
OF IT ALL


BRYAN FERRY ROXY MUSIC
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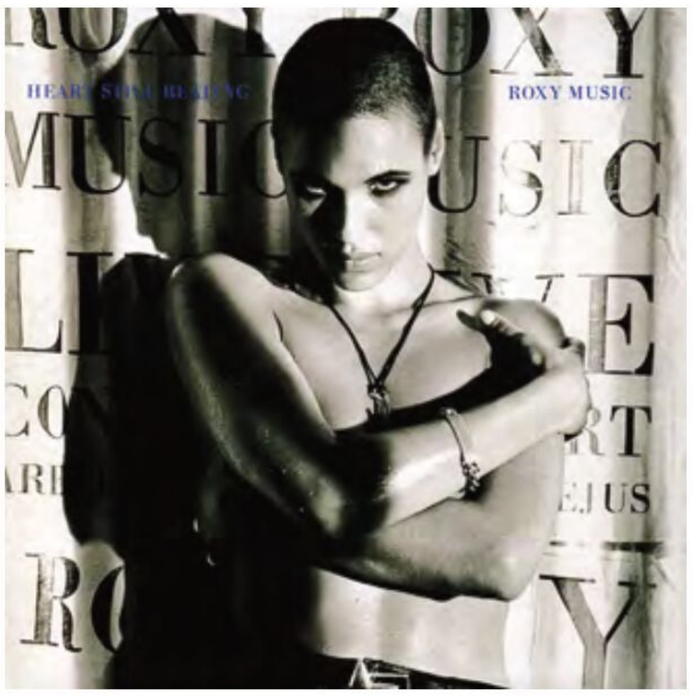
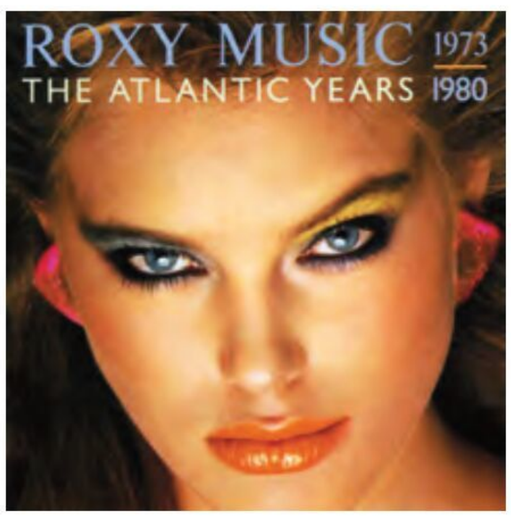
STREET LIFE 20 GREAT HITS

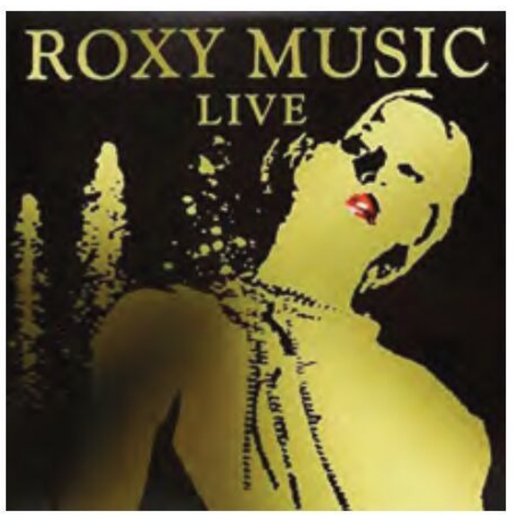

ROXY MUSIC

THE BEST OF
ROXY MUSIC

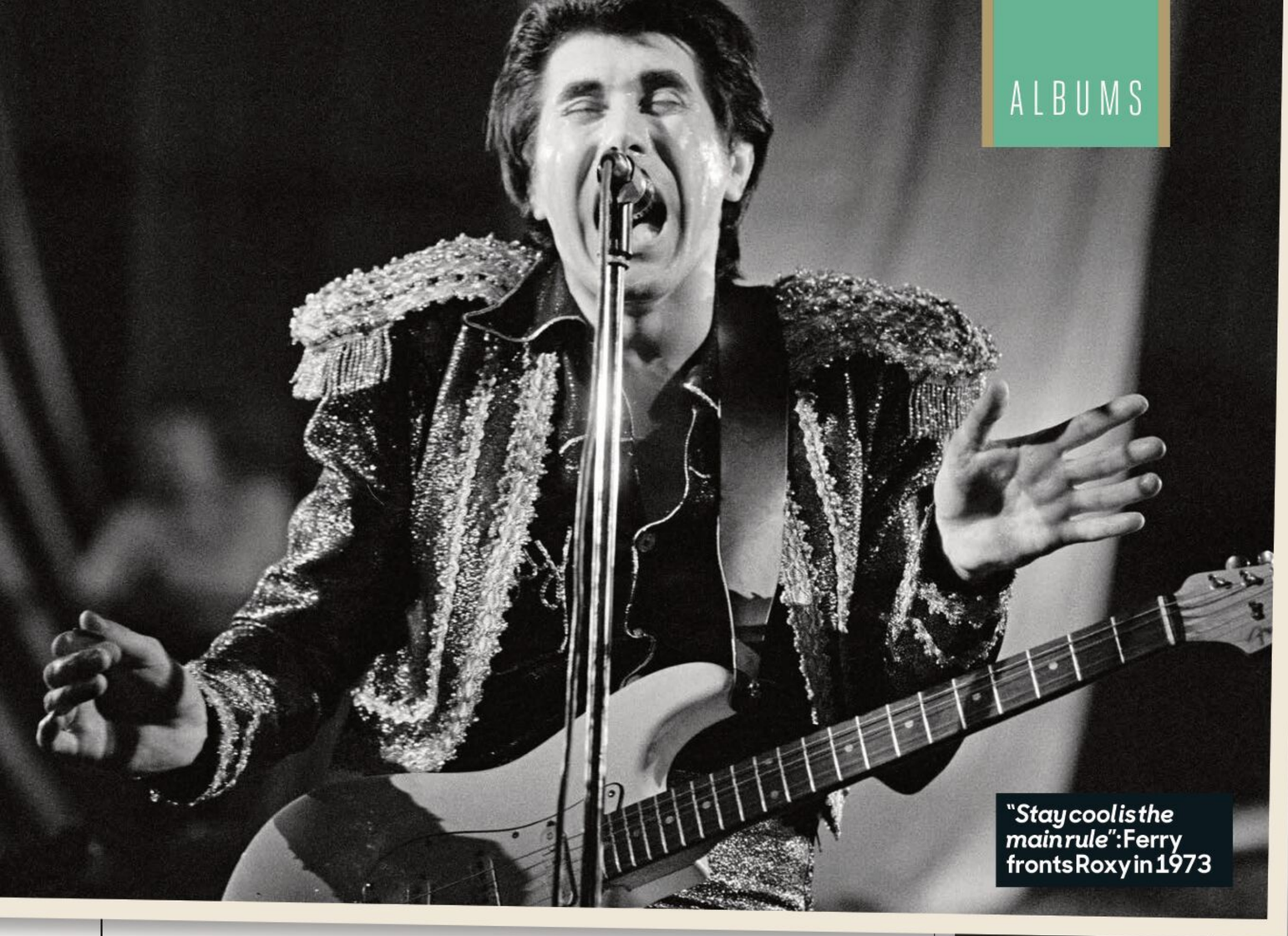
MUSIQUE
Roxy
the high road


ROXY MUSIC 1973
THE ATLANTIC YEARS 1980

ROXY MUSIC
FOR YOUR PLEASURE
STRANDED


ROXY MUSIC
LIVE

bryan ferry + roxy music
THE PLATINUM COLLECTION



"Stay cool is the main rule": Ferry fronts Roxy in 1973

rounds up hit singles – all of them except "Both Ends Burning" – plus strong album tracks like "Editions Of You", "A Song For Europe" and "Mother Of Pearl". For fans, this meant the chance to get the singles "Virginia Plain" and "Pyjamarama" on an album for the first time. There's nothing from the debut album, but otherwise the Eno and Jobson versions of the lineup are both represented. The album sold pretty well and created scope for an opportunistic re-release of "Virginia Plain", which went to No 11. Not bad for a band that didn't exist. It's never been released on CD but is a worthwhile purchase on vinyl.

Roxy reunited in 1978 and split for the second time five years later. The same live/comp release dynamic followed this second dissolution, but this time the results were nowhere near as satisfactory. For a start, the live album was even shorter – in fact, with four tracks and less than 30 minutes of music, **THE HIGH ROAD** POLYDOR, 1983 ★★ is actually an EP. It's an odd affair too, containing two covers – the inexplicably beloved "Jealous Guy" and equally bloodless "Like A Hurricane" – plus a Ferry solo number, "Can't Let Go". The only real Roxy song is "My Only Love" from *Flesh + Blood*. Recorded at Glasgow's Apollo in 1982, it's almost wilfully obscure and could perhaps be seen as a confused reaction to the huge success of *Avalon* and the band's subsequent decision to take an extended break. Later that same year, Polydor released **THE ATLANTIC YEARS 1973–1980** POLYDOR, 1983 ★, another strangely compiled and fairly pointless album that collates releases from their US label, featuring eight cuts from *Manifesto* and *Flesh + Blood* and then chucked in the hits "Love Is The Drug" and "Do The Strand" for good measure.

A decent and near-definitive compilation finally arrived in 1986 with **STREET LIFE: 20 GREAT HITS** EG ★★★★★. This best-selling double album offers an overview of both phases of the band's career. It was released by EG, the label that was originally formed by former Roxy managers David Enthoven and John Gaydon but by the mid-'80s was a Polydor imprint. The record also has a handful of songs recorded by Bryan Ferry as solo projects, thus beginning the process of Ferry/Roxy unification. Pretty much every Ferry/Roxy single is included, all the way up to 1985's "Slave To Love" and the Ferry solo songs slot alongside the Roxy material with such comfort it's very easy to forget where the divide actually lies – "Let's Stick Together" is solo Ferry but could be Roxy, while "Jealous Guy" is Roxy but feels like solo Ferry. Following *Street Life*, that distinction would become increasingly irrelevant and Bryan Ferry would *be* Roxy Music in a way that was never applied to Phil Manzanera, Andy Mackay or Brian Eno.

Indeed, 1988's **THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION** EG, 1988 ★★★ reverses the Ferry/Roxy balance without any noticeable loss of quality. This compilation focused more on Ferry's solo work but includes half-a-dozen Roxy tracks, including "Love Is The Drug", "All I Want Is You" and "Jealous Guy". What's noticeable is that the more in-your-face side of Roxy's output is sidelined in favour of the smoother style Ferry now represented. The album includes a couple of rarities – "Help Me", which was a US-only single, and Ferry's cover of the Jim Reeves song "He'll Have To Go", which was released as a single in 1989.

EG's next trick was to restore a sense of artificial division by creating **THE EARLY YEARS** EG, 1989 ★★★★ and **THE LATER YEARS** EG, 1989 ★★★, which were unequal summaries of the Roxy story. Again, there's something slightly off about this. While *The Early Years* is a straightforward, if occasionally contentious, 16-track compilation focusing on the first three albums (plus "Pyjamarama"), *The Later Years* is a four-CD boxset that included all of *Manifesto*, *Flesh + Blood* and *Avalon* plus a fourth CD containing the best of EG's stable, including King Crimson, Brian Eno, Killing Joke and T.Rex. *The Early Years* was remastered for release in 2000, while *The Later Years* is now mildly collectable.

The Roxy comp carnival then slowed down for a while, allowing time for a couple of live albums to sneak out. **HEART STILL BEATING** VIRGIN, 1990 ★★ is a concert from France in 1982. This is nothing like as vivid as the performances recorded on *Viva!*, with Mackay and Manzanera only sporadically given licence to enjoy themselves and instead asked to limit their contributions to providing a dinner party soundtrack for Ferry, who isn't in a particularly captivating mood himself. There's little to fault the track selection – an fine rarity is "Impossible Guitar", from Manzanera's 1982 solo album *Primitive Guitars*, while "Dance Away" and "My Only Love" are both fine versions – but in general it's a suffocatingly polite affair. Just compare the version of "Both Ends Burning" on *Heart Still Beating* from the one on *Viva!* to get a flavour of the differences between the two albums.

Next was **CONCERT CLASSICS** RANCH LIFE, 1998 ★★★, an unofficial but quasi-legal recording of a concert in Denver from 1979 during the *Manifesto* tour. This concert has also been released as *Live In America* and *Ladytron*, but the best version is 2001's **CONCERTO** NEPTUNE MUSIC, 2001 ★★★★, which splits the show over two CDs and has a mixture of *Manifesto* cuts and a number of older classics, all played with a lot more verve and wit than you get on *Heart Still Beating*. Official or otherwise, this is a vast improvement on *Heart Still Beating* – not coincidentally, it was one of the last shows to feature Paul Thompson, and a lot of their live panache went with him.

Roxy haven't so far released another archival concert, so fans had to wait for the 40th-anniversary shows for another live release. But before them came a further splurge of comps. This began with **THE THRILL OF IT ALL** VIRGIN, 1995 ★★★★★, a careful and very diplomatic four-CD boxset covering all eight studio albums plus rarities. There's so much material that it's almost worth just forking out for the original albums, but that would mean missing out on the cool booklet and fourth CD of B-sides and remixes. The first three CDs divide almost precisely down the three phases of the band's history – Eno, Jobson and the 1978 reformation – and there are few quibbles to be had, other than the absence of "Whirlwind" or anything from *Viva!*.

For many people, it's all about the extras anyway. This fourth disc features several tracks that were not previously available on CD, including a number of early B-sides. "The Numberer" is a jazz-rock

CRITICS' VERDICTS

VIVA!
"Even if you already own the tracks (and you will), there's a deal of interest in being in on the growth of one of the most stylish British operations of recent years. Especially when one can't shake the feeling that this same operation has very little further to run."
Tony Tyler, NME, 17/7/1976

GREATEST HITS
"Not so long ago I believed that these were the greatest songs that could be written in the world as it is, but now I see how much they indulged themselves. Despair. Things were different in 1973."
Julie Burchill, NME, 5/11/1977

Don't stop the dance: (l–r) Manzanera, Ferry and Mackay reconvene as Roxy Music at The Theater at Madison Square Garden, NYC, July 24, 2001

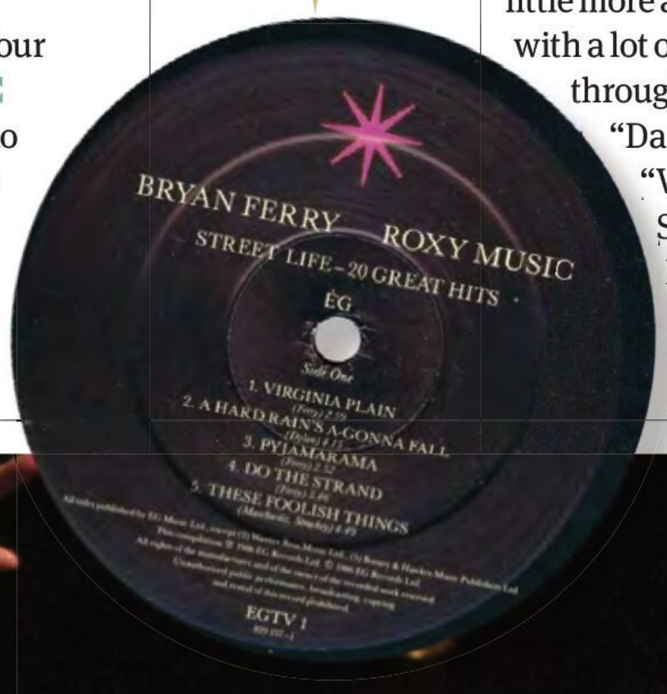
MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

instrumental from the "Virginia Plain" single, while "The Pride And The Pain" is a swooning Morricone-influenced orchestral masterpiece, with whips. Paul Thompson's genre-hopping "Your Application's Failed" from the "All I Want Is You" B-side has all the compressed manic energy of prime early Roxy, while 1975's "Sultanesque" is very similar to the sort of ambient sound that former Roxy man Brian Eno was starting to record. Several of the B-sides were written by Mackay, Manzanera or Thompson. The fourth CD also contains a number of remixes plus the three big non-album singles – "Virginia Plain", "Pyjamarama" and "Jealous Guy". There are also extended remixes of "Dance Away", "Angel Eyes" and "The Main Thing", but no live tracks and nothing previously unreleased. These would have to wait until the deluxe reissue programme that started in 2018 with *Roxy Music*, which featured BBC sessions and the earliest live recordings – either of which will make a fine standalone release one day.

Since *The Thrill Of It All* there have been three further Roxy compilations. **MORE THAN THIS** EMI, 1995 ★★ is a half-hearted single-CD Ferry/Roxy round-up that alternates Ferry and Roxy songs over 20 tracks and includes later Ferry songs such as "Is Your Love Strong Enough?" from the *Legend* soundtrack, 1993's cover of "I Put A Spell On You" and "Your Painted Smile" from 1994. **The BEST OF ROXY MUSIC** VIRGIN, 2001 ★★★ is an 18-track single-CD comp released to coincide with the band's 2001 reunion tour. As part of the band's 50th anniversary celebrations and 2022 reunion tour, it has been issued (alongside all the band's studio albums) in a half-speed vinyl master edition. It has an almost identical tracklisting to *Street Life* only without the Ferry solo songs and a rejigged running order that puts everything in a reverse chronology, which is a bit annoying. Finally, **THE PLATINUM COLLECTION** EMI, 2004 ★★★ is an elongated three-disc 45-track Ferry/Roxy collection that included decent early Ferry solo tracks alongside the usual Roxy classics, going right up to Ferry's fine 2002 LP *Frantic*. **ESSENTIAL** EMI, 2011 ★★★★ is a good budget overview, with 16 tracks including a live "Do The Strand" and a slight prejudice towards the earlier, more experimental version of the band.

THE ELEGANT SHEEN OF LATER ROXY IS GIVEN SOME MUCH-NEEDED OOMPH BY THE RETURNING PAUL THOMPSON

Roxy's disappointingly limited live output was swelled in 2003 by the release of **LIVE** EAGLE, 2003 ★★★★, a double album that covered the 2001 world tour, reproducing the tour setlist but using shows from numerous concerts in Europe, Asia, Australia and North America. What impresses is the way the band consolidate the two different eras, with the elegant sheen of later Roxy given some much-needed oomph by the returning Paul Thompson. The setlist draws largely from the first three LPs, although *Avalon* is also well represented. There's no Jobson or Eno to provide the unpredictable, but Chris Spedding joins Manzanera on guitar, which adds some (tasteful) pizzazz to tracks like "My Only Love" and "My Heart Is Still Beating". A little more adventure wouldn't have gone amiss, but it's played with a lot of heart and builds to a satisfying climax, working through the hits in an energetic final run that takes in "Dance Away", "Jealous Guy", "Editions Of You", "Virginia Plain", "Love Is The Drug" and "Do The Strand" before the unexpected finale of "For Your Pleasure". The reconstituted Roxy continued to perform until 2011, but in terms of live releases this was the final word.

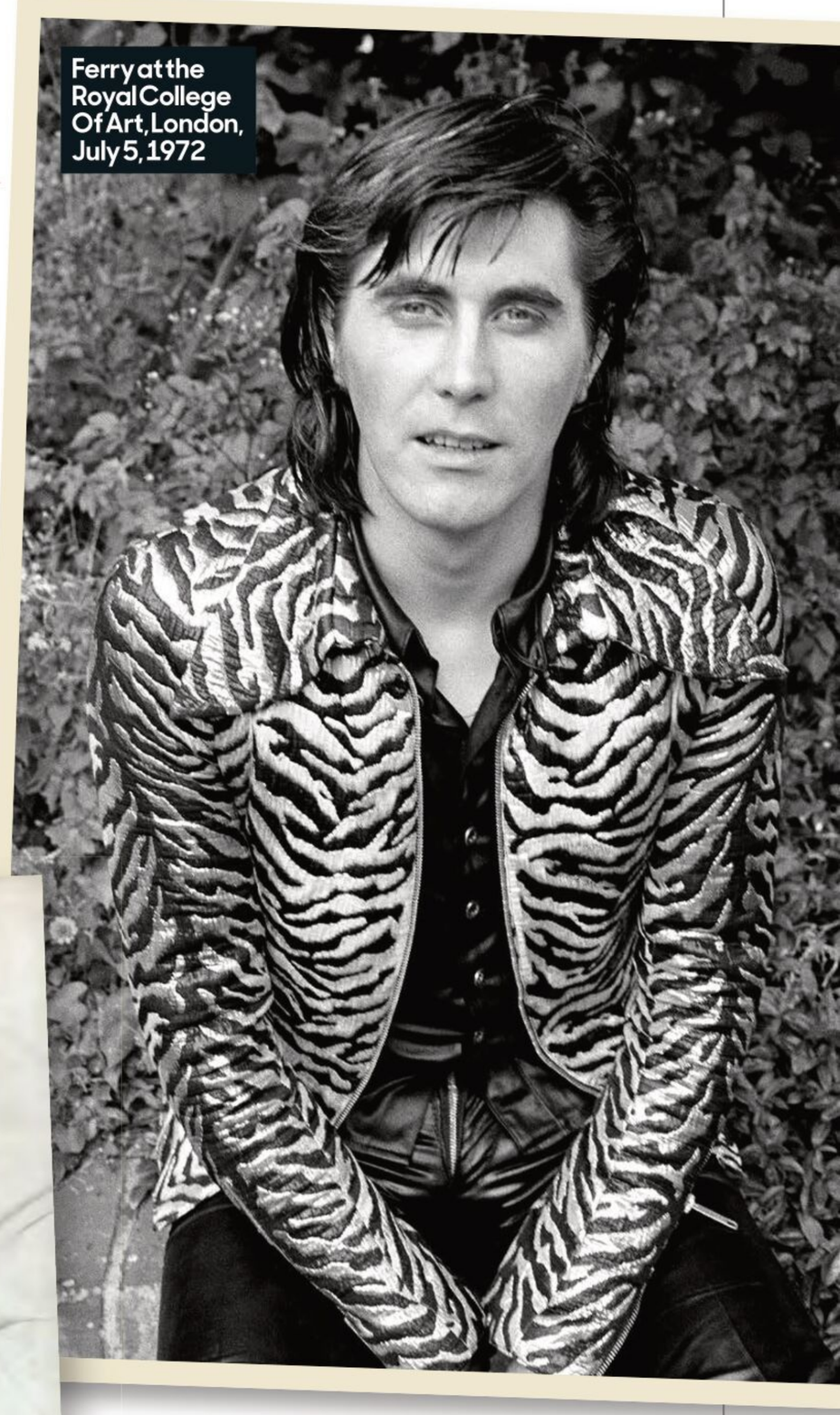


SCOTT GRIES/IMAGEDIRECT

Day one of the Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival, CA, the Empire Polo Club, April 10, 2015

"A life-changing experience"

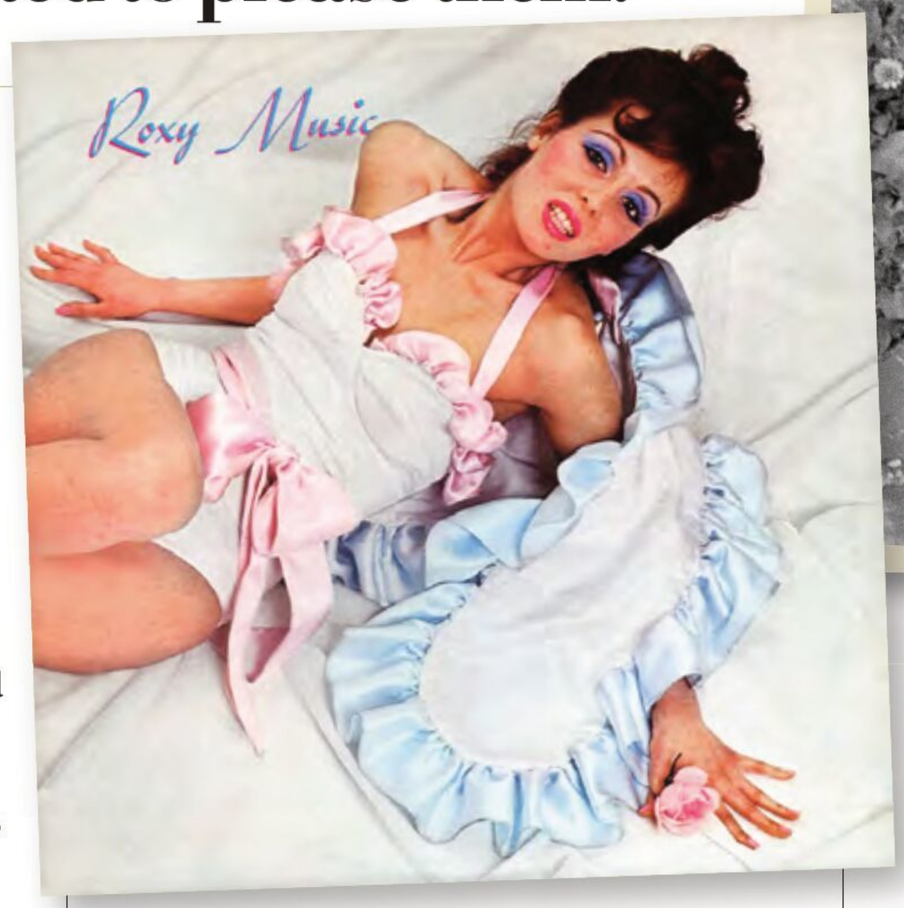
BRYAN FERRY looks back on 50 years of Roxy Music, and explains how willow trees, a "great friend" (his Steinway grand piano), and a taste for dry martinis contributed to his evolving vision for the band. "Our audience was becoming increasingly sophisticated," he writes for *Uncut*, "and I so much wanted to please them."


Ferry at the Royal College Of Art, London, July 5, 1972

TAKEN FROM UNCUT MAY 2022

FIFTY years ago this month, Roxy Music emerged from an old movie theatre on London's Piccadilly clutching the master tapes for what would turn out to be an epochal debut. Though conceived by band-leader Bryan Ferry as an "exploration of many styles" created by six wildly diverse musical personalities, the glamour-starved audience instantly recognised it as something fresh, urgent and seductively postmodern. "Making the Roxy Music albums was a life-changing experience for me," reflects Ferry today – and also for everyone who devoured them at the time.

Like a swan gliding across a moonlit lake, Roxy Music often gave the impression of moving with effortless grace. But what Ferry remembers most is the hard work going on beneath the surface, "working intensively with such a unique group of people. It was an amazingly productive time." Ahead of Roxy's 50th anniversary tour in the autumn, he recalls intense recording sessions and painstaking photoshoots, chasing something "in the air" from The Strand to The Bahamas. "I have many good memories of the camaraderie we shared, as well as the tensions that are part of the collaboration. I'll be looking forward to celebrating all of this with our audience later in the year." *SAM RICHARDS*



ROXY MUSIC

Island, 1972

Re-make! Re-model! Roxy strike gold straight away with an enthusiastically arch rifle through pop's dressing-up box

I started putting the band together in 1970 when I began working with Graham Simpson, who had played in my college band, The Gas Board. Later that year I met Andy Mackay and he joined us with his synthesiser and oboe, and later saxophone. At this point I was writing the songs on piano and at the same time trying to put together the band to play them. We didn't have a tape recorder, so Andy suggested his friend Brian Eno could come and record us. Eno brought his huge reel-to-reel Ferrograph machine, and ended up staying on and becoming part of the band, using Andy's VCS3 synthesiser to create sounds and treat the instruments we were playing. We hit it off, and by the time we started recording the album we had the complete band. I liked many kinds of music, so stylistically I was keen for the songs to be wide-ranging and not follow one particular channel. I was lucky with this band in that we had so many different sounds to play with and it was a great opportunity for me to write interesting stuff. Consequently,

"We were all hungry to learn"

BRIAN FERRY

KARL WALTER/GETTY IMAGES FOR COACHELLA, BRIAN COOKE/REDFERNS

Roxy Music, October 28, 1973: (l-r) Eddie Jobson, Sal Maida, Bryan Ferry, Andy Mackay, Phil Manzanera and Paul Thompson

the first album was an exploration of many styles and so diverse that it indicated many different futures the band could follow. The first Roxy album is an unusual collage of musical elements, and the songs themselves, if you break them down, are just simple experiments in different genres. This was the first album that any of us had made. We were all hungry to learn and new to the experience of being in a recording studio. It was a dream come true to be able to do this.

EG Management signed us up to Island Records, and they brought in Pete Sinfield from King Crimson to produce us. He seemed to be ideal, very enthusiastic and cheerful. The whole process was a delight. The record was made in a rather bizarre place called Command Studios on Piccadilly, an old movie theatre. How appropriate.

"Simple experiments in different genres"

BRIAN FERRY

FOR YOUR PLEASURE

ISLAND, 1973

And for his next trick... Ferry poses as a languorous insider, exposing the darkness at the heart of la dolce vita

JORGEN ANGEL/REDFERNS

After we toured the first record, I had to quickly come up with a new batch of songs for the second album. I moved into this flat in London's Earl's Court and started writing there, and my friend Nick de Ville also lent me his cottage where I worked on the songs before taking them to the band. It seems we'd learned a lot on the road in the intervening months since making the first album, and now the band was much stronger and the songs were more knowing.

We went into Air Studios and recording in this great place above Oxford Circus was really a career high for me. By this point I had a better idea of what the band could achieve and what each musician could bring to the record. There was a new bass player, the guitarist John Porter, who, like Graham, had been at university with me, and he brought a certain funkiness to the record. He played an important role, as did Chris Thomas, who we met at Air Studios and who ended up producing the record. He fitted in really well and his enthusiasm brought out the best in me and all the others in the band. Highlights included the solos by Eno and Phil on "Editions Of You", Andy's sax on "The Bogus Man" and Paul's powerful drumming throughout.

This album contains some of my best songs: "Do The Strand", "In Every Dream Home A Heartache" and "Editions Of You". There was something about the record that felt complete to me. Everyone excelled themselves and whereas the first album was us throwing ideas in different directions, this was more focused and darker in mood. It captured that time pretty well, I think. I can't quite explain what was in the air, but we were right on it. I'm very proud of that album.

STRANDED

ISLAND, 1973

Eno out, Eddie in – but any potential turmoil is obscured by another set of terrific, swaggering songs

By now everything was running very fast and one album or tour would merge into the next. While we were touring, studio time was being booked for us and I was under pressure to write more songs. I didn't have much going on in my life apart from touring, my flat and my piano. While recording *For Your Pleasure*, I'd found this lovely old Steinway grand which has been my great friend ever since. I've written most of my life's work on it.

I remember a couple of different locations when I was writing *Stranded*. I went to Greece to write some of the songs, including "Mother Of Pearl". I wrote the lyrics for "A Song for Europe" at a friend's place down in Sussex, and then "Sunset" in Tenerife, where I was resting after a tonsil operation. One of the album tracks was "Psalm", which was in fact one of the first songs I'd written in 1971, but hadn't been finished in time for the first Roxy album.

The big change in the band of course was that Brian Eno had left and Eddie Jobson had joined. In between For *Your Pleasure* and *Stranded*, Eddie had worked on *These Foolish Things* (my first solo album), and his playing had really impressed me. Sadly we lost Eno's amazing talents, but we gained a prodigious all-round musician, a

supremely gifted piano player and violinist. He brought a new musical dimension to the band. Looking back, it would have been so great to have had both of them on the same record.

COUNTRY LIFE

ISLAND, 1974

A more self-conscious Roxy sound and style is cemented

When we did the first Roxy Music album, I didn't really know who would be listening. At some point as the albums went on, I began to realise we had an audience who were eagerly anticipating each record, listening hard, and some of them being quite critical. It was an audience who seemed to be interested in what I had to say, and how I was saying it. In retrospect, it raised my sense of responsibility for the work.

For *Country Life*, Air Studios continued to be our second home. We had essentially the same team as we did on *Stranded*. John Punter, the chief engineer, produced it with us. Eddie Jobson crafted some great string arrangements, especially on "The Thrill Of It All", and played a memorable solo on "Out Of The Blue", which I co-wrote with Phil Manzanera. Once again we were expanding our musical range and solidifying the repertoire. This time period is all a bit of a blur to me because we were rushing from one thing to another. All we were doing was touring and making these records, working hard, living and breathing the music. So the recording was intense and hands-on. We all worked late nights. I think this album has some outstanding performances by the musicians, and also some of my best lyrics.

SIREN

ISLAND, 1975

Jerry Hall graces the cover, while a memorable bassline drives the band's biggest hit to date

We did this record once again at Air Studios. The assistant from *Country Life*, Steve Nye, was now engineering and Chris Thomas returned to produce. At this point I'd moved from Earl's Court and I think I wrote most of the songs in my basement in Holland Park. Back then we would work incredibly late, until the sun came up the next day. One of the unsung stars of *Siren*, *Country Life* and *Stranded* was the bass player John Gustafson. He had played in one of the Liverpool bands in the 1960s [*The Big 3*] and was an incredibly gifted musician who brought so much life to the songs on these three albums. "Mother Of Pearl", "The Thrill Of It All", and "Love Is the Drug" were all transformed by his inventive playing.

The album had a strong cover. I'd seen pictures of a girl in *Vogue* magazine, Jerry Hall, who I thought looked like a mermaid, with long wavy hair. I showed them to the fashion designer Antony Price, who had worked on all the Roxy album covers, and he started doing these drawings of mermaids. We went down to Wales with the photographer Graham Hughes.

My old friend from art school Nick de Ville went there first on a reconnaissance trip, and he said it was perfect, wild and stormy with huge waves lashing. However, the day we went, it was the hottest day in the British Isles for 300 years or something, with eerily still water. It looked great though, very Ancient Greece. Graham put this blue filter on the shot, enhanced by Antony with blue paint. We went to great lengths to get things right. It was all done in the shot, and you'd sort of cross your fingers and hope the pictures would turn out OK when they were developed. It was all very hands-on and 'cottage industry' in those days.

Man of wealth and taste: Ferry circa 1975

MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

Going Dutch: Roxy in Amsterdam, March 6, 1979 – (l-r) Andy Mackay, Gary Tibbs, Dave Skinner, Bryan Ferry, Phil Manzanera and Paul Thompson

MANIFESTO

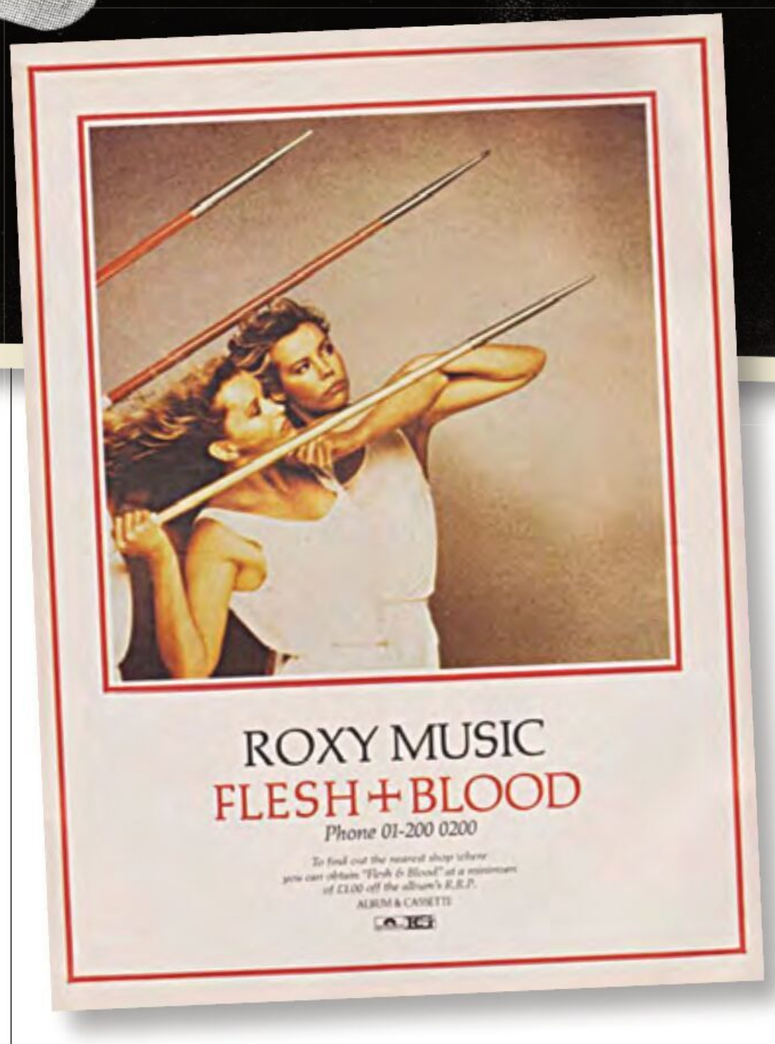
EG, 1979

Ferry reconfigures the band, just in time to grab a slice of disco glamour

I had been concentrating on my solo career for a couple of years, touring and living abroad, mainly in America. In Switzerland I made an album called *The Bride Stripped Bare*, a collection of new songs and covers, with what I felt was an interesting gang of great English and American session musicians. This record meant a lot to me at the time and I was disappointed by its reception. So I decided to put Roxy Music back together.

This time the band included some of the people I'd been playing with on *The Bride...*, plus Phil, Andy and Paul. We went to a studio in the English countryside, Ridge Farm, to record most of it, and the rest was done at Basing Street Studios in London, and a session or two at Atlantic Studios in New York. We split the album into two halves, East and West. The West side had the songs with a more smooth, mainstream, American-influenced sound, and the East side was slightly more edgy and European in feel.

By this time I was living in Sussex, and I remember driving home through many misty mornings. Some nights we would stay overnight at Ridge Farm – being in a residential studio was good for night music. The track "Manifesto" is one of my favourites, like a call-to-arms, and featured some marvellous soulful and inventive bass playing by Alan Spenner, who together with guitarist Neil Hubbard became an important part of my sound. "Dance Away" was the hit, of course, and was a track I'd tried to do a couple years before on my solo albums *In Your Mind* and then again on *The Bride Stripped Bare*, but I could never get it right. I felt it was too much of a pop song. Then I played it to my friend in New York, Earl McGrath, who said you should give it to Bob Clearmountain to mix. Bob made it a hit.



FLESH + BLOOD

EG, 1980

The slick pop-rock sheen tilts at the mainstream, though there are intriguing covers of "In The Midnight Hour" and "Eight Miles High"

We had started working with Rhett Davies, who had come in halfway through the *Manifesto* album. He had been an assistant years ago on *Another Time, Another Place*, my second solo record. He soon became my go-to producer, and this fruitful relationship has lasted for many years. We did this album at Basing Street Studios and also at Phil Manzanera's Gallery Studio.

It has the ballad "My Only Love", which I wrote in Sussex. I remember referencing a beautiful willow tree in the sunken garden and that came into the lyric. I was writing a lot of it down there and completing the songs in the studios in London. The rhythm section on the album were Neil Hubbard, Alan Spenner, Paul Carrack and Andy Newmark, great musicians who lived and breathed American R&B. They brought a lot to the record.

Our audience was becoming increasingly sophisticated, and I so much wanted to please them. I was also anxious for each Roxy Music album to sound different from the last.

AVALON

EG, 1982

***"Now the party's over..."* An exquisitely managed exit from the dukes of decadence**

Avalon represented about as far as I could take that sound. Some elements of *Manifesto* led to *Flesh + Blood* and some of *Flesh + Blood* led to *Avalon*. So those three albums are linked as a trilogy in a way, just as *Stranded*, *Country Life*, and *Siren* had been years before.

I wanted our records to reach people's ears in America, the place where most of my musical heroes had come from. And at the time they didn't really want to hear things like "The Bogus Man". I wanted to make a record that was going to be played everywhere. It was ambitious. And *Avalon* was that record. We made some of it at Phil's studio, some in New York, and some in the Bahamas at Compass Point. I especially loved recording in New York, and staying at the hotels Stanhope and Carlyle on the Upper East Side, where I developed a taste for dry martinis.

Phil and Andy made some great contributions, Phil with "Take A Chance With Me", and Andy with "While My Heart Is Still Beating". On our last day of recording we had one more song to complete and I remember being in the Carlyle the night before, writing the lyrics to "Avalon", thinking I've got to sing this tomorrow or we miss the deadline. I went into The Power Station studios the next day, Sunday. It was just me, Rhett and Bob Clearmountain, and I was singing the song. I went out to the coffee machine and heard this girl's voice coming from the studio next door. And I thought, what an amazing voice, I've got to get her to come and sing on this track. She was called Yanick Étienne, a girl from Haiti. I asked her to try some scat vocals. It sounded so great – this lovely voice floating through the outro. It was one of those lucky, magical things. Rhett and I had slaved over this record for months and this felt like the pay-off. *Avalon* was a sound that people wanted. Like *For Your Pleasure*, it was another high spot in my career. ✪

"I wanted our records to reach people's ears in America"

BRIAN FERRY

GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/REDFERNS, ROB VERHORST/REDFERNS

Smoke gets in your eyes: Kijkduin, the Netherlands, May 28, 1982

Roxy Music in full retro-futurist pomp (with *For Your Pleasure* bassist John Porter, third left)

Miscellany

WAGs, cover models and associates; band members' solo works; Roxy rarities; the ever-rotating bass-player slot; DVDs, film footage and more…

Discreet Life

The greatest story ever gatefold: a guide to who is actually who in the small print on Roxy album sleeves

THE SIRENS

Gnomically credited, Doreen Chanter and Jaqui Sullivan sang backup on the *Siren* tour in 1975, and duly on the live album *Viva!* – where Jaqui appears on the cover. Both also sang on Ferry solo albums *Let's Stick Together* and *In Your Mind*.

ANTONY PRICE

Renowned fashion designer and "image-maker" responsible for Ferry's lounge sophistico wardrobe and stylist on every Roxy album. When not anti-dressing Roxy's cover models, Price worked with The Rolling Stones, Duran Duran and Lou Reed, and has gone on to dress the likes of Diana Ross, Jerry Hall, Yasmin Le Bon and Camilla Parker-Bowles.

SIMON PUXLEY

Close friend of Ferry who died in 1999. "He was a big part of my life in music," Ferry said in 2001. "He wrote the sleeve notes on the first Roxy Music album cover. He was like the fifth Beatle: a part of Roxy Music who was always there. He was a beautiful writer, a doctor of philosophy and of English literature. He worked with me every day."

JOHN PORTER

Member of Ferry's pre-Roxy band The Gas Board, roped in to play bass on *For Your Pleasure*. Went on to produce several Ferry solo albums as well as records by The Smiths, Billy Bragg and Ryan Adams, among many others.

SMILE

AKA ex-mod Keith Wainwright, avant-garde hairdresser to stars including Roy Wood, Jane Birkin and Roxy Music – and their cover models. Keith emerged from Leonard in Grosvenor Square to head up Smile, the last word in '60s and '70s in-crowd chic society hairstyling. "To have your hair cut by Keith at Smile," wrote Michael Bracewell in his 2007 biography of Roxy, "placed the client as a person of high fashion and progressive tastes."

KARI-ANN MULLER

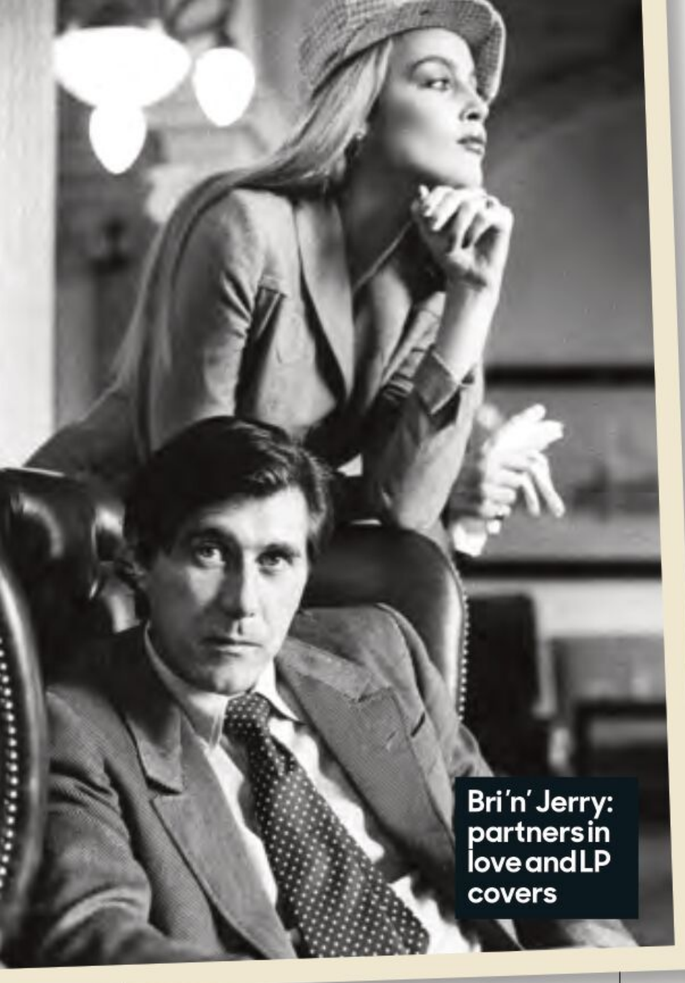
A one-time Bond girl and future star of Joan Collins' *The Bitch*, the cover model for Roxy Music's eponymous debut LP was spotted by Ferry at a fashion show and paid just £20 for the shoot. "It was very… ice-creamy, in a way," Muller told Q. "The colours remind me of marshmallow, like something really delicious." She later married Mick Jagger's brother Chris and swapped modelling for teaching yoga.

In the pink: Kari-Ann Muller, 1971

AMANDA LEAR

Her origins are an enigma – she's rumoured to have been born anytime between 1939 and 1950, and has dismissed reports that she is a male-born transsexual as a publicity stunt invented by David Bowie – but Lear had already lived quite the life before appearing on the sleeve of *For Your Pleasure* as the world's most inappropriately dressed panther attendant. She had dated Brian Jones, posed for Yves Saint Laurent and Coco Chanel and become Salvador Dalí's muse before a brief engagement to Ferry thrust her into the music world. She went on to have a year-long affair with Bowie and become a million-selling European disco queen before launching a successful career as a TV presenter in Italy and France.

JORGEN ANGEL/REDFERNS, MIKE MCKEOWN/DAILY EXPRESS/GETTY IMAGES



Bri'n' Jerry: partners in love and LP covers

that Bryan Ferry met in a bar in Portugal and convinced to strip to their underwear for the cover of *Country Life*. Grundewald, on the left, was Can guitarist Michael Karoli's girlfriend – now an art teacher. "We just had to look weird and surprised," she said.

JERRY HALL

Her turn as a mermaid on the cover of *Siren* was the launchpad for a glittering career as model and actress. Within two years the stratospheric Texan had graced 40 magazine covers and was commanding a $1,000-a-day price tag as one of the first bona fide supermodels. When she left Ferry to spend two decades with Mick Jagger, Ferry was so angry he kept her clothes.

MARILYN COLE

Who knows what it was about *Playboy*'s January 1972's Playmate Of The Month that caught Bryan Ferry's eye, but Marilyn Cole was swiftly recruited as the (uncredited) cover star of *Stranded* in 1973. Cole has since turned her hand to journalism, where she specialises in covering professional boxing.

EVELINE GRUNDEWALD

One of the two German fans

"WE JUST HAD TO LOOK WEIRD AND SURPRISED"

EVELINE GRUNEWALD

KONSTANZE KAROLI

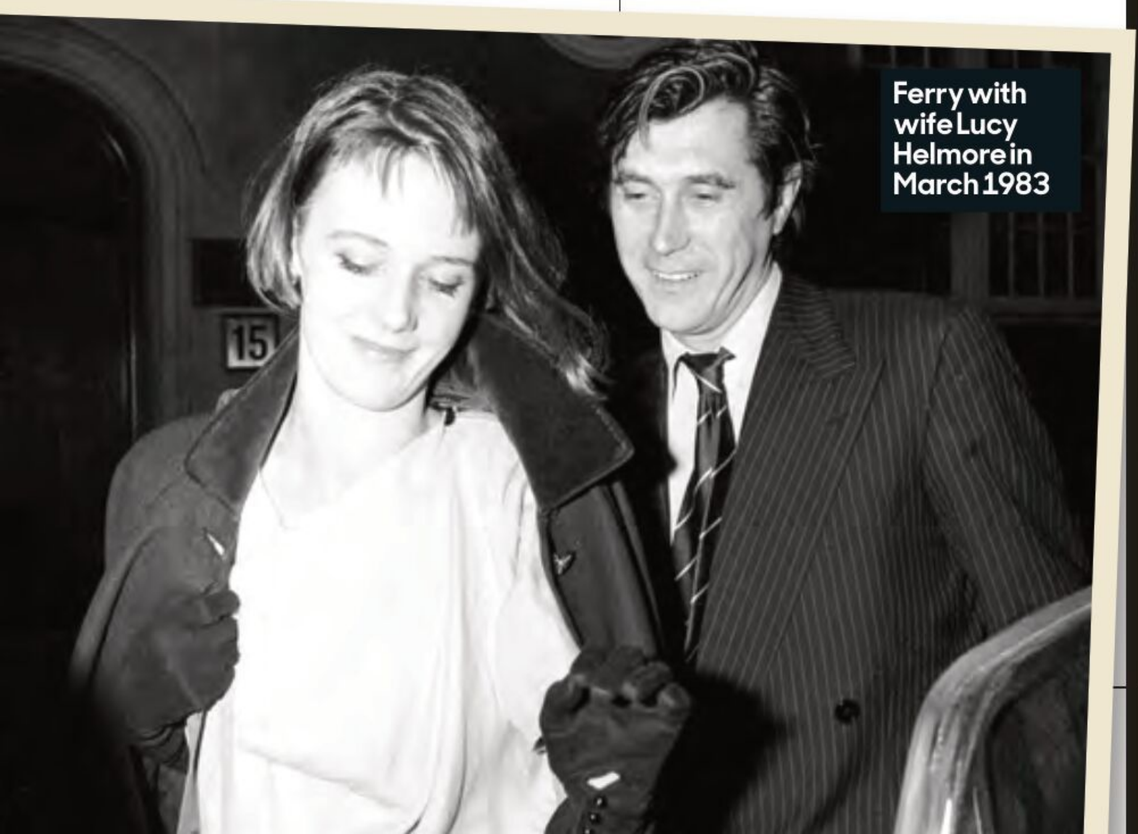
Lonstanze Karoli (on the right on *Country Life*) was the cousin of Michael Karoli, and went on to become a psychotherapist.

AIMEE STEPHENSON

Closest of the three models (alongside other unknowns Shelley Mann and Ashley Bolton) selected by Peter Saville for the sleeve of *Flesh + Blood*, Stephenson went on to become a writer and film director. She tragically died in 2002 from burns she sustained on a bus while on a book research trip to Peru, when a stash of illegal fireworks exploded beneath a seat in front of her.

LUCY HELMORE

Ensuring that Roxy maintained the tradition of cover beauties to the end, model and socialite Helmore appeared on the cover of *Avalon* in 1982 disguised as an Arthurian falconer. That same year, Ferry married her. The couple were together for 20 years, divorcing in 2003. Helmore remarried, but committed suicide in July 2018 after a long struggle with depression.



Ferry with wife Lucy Helmore in March 1983

He's the Follies good fellow...

Roxy's Andy Mackay talks us through his greatest solo hits. "I'm grateful to Roxy..."

AWAY from the impressive Roxy Music catalogue, Andy Mackay's extracurricular activities may not fill as much space as some of his colleagues, but they form an intriguing and varied CV. "I'm a sax player, mostly, so it could be argued that opportunities to spread my wings would be limited," he says today. "The result of that might suggest my career has been a bit spotty, but by the same token it's allowed me to work without any huge weight of expectation, I've been able to follow a more idiosyncratic path. I'm grateful to Roxy, though, because our success undoubtedly afforded me great creative freedom away from the band."

IN SEARCH OF EDDIE RIFF

Island, 1974

"Wagner, Shubert and Motown under one roof! It was a light-hearted project, something to do while Bryan was making his solo albums and Phil was working on 801. Making the Roxy records was always a strain, there was a pressure to top what we'd done before, so it was good to do something no-one would take too seriously. It was a little musical autobiography, picking up on things that appealed to me through the years and putting a little arty spin on them."

ROCK FOLLIES

Island, 1976

"It was an interesting time to make a TV series about a rock group, especially an all-female one, and the series holds up well. It addresses the control men have over women; it examines both the sexism and racism that was inherent in the industry back then. Howard Schuman wrote the script and I put music to his lyrics; we wrote about 50 songs together, although only half of them featured across the two series. It was a huge success – I think it was the first time an LP went straight in at No 1 since The Beatles."

RESOLVING CONTRADICTIONS

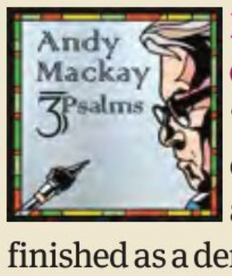
Bronze, 1978

"It looked like Roxy were going to be taking a long break after *Siren*, so I visited China as part of a cultural fact-finding tour – it wasn't a holiday destination back then, but the country had opened up just enough for organised parties to go and have a look around. It struck me as a place that was undergoing radical changes; I don't think anywhere else was subject to such a wholesale transformation, and I wanted to chronicle that in my own strange way! China made a huge impression on me, it was an eye-opener."

THE EXPLORERS

Virgin, 1985

"I was disappointed Bryan wanted to focus on a solo career after *Avalon*, as I think we were progressing towards something really interesting and the next Roxy album would have been the best thing we'd ever done. Phil and myself took some of the ideas we'd had brewing and channelled them into The Explorers, but it wasn't well received. Critics thought we'd chose James Wraith as our singer as he sounded like Bryan, but I don't hear that much of a resemblance. I'm still proud of the records we made; hopefully they'll be rediscovered at some point."



3PSALMS

Good Deeds, 2018

"I've been working on this one and off for 25 years, although it was largely finished as a demo around 2000 before I got distracted with Roxy again. I don't write lyrics, so the Psalms seemed like a good familiar thing to hang some music on. It's not an album made for a religious audience as such, despite having a religious element to it, but sometimes all of us have a momentary flash where we wonder about our existence. It's more a case of us exploring who we are, where we came from and why we're here – not that I'm offering any cast-iron answers."

TERRY STAUNTON

DAVE HOGAN/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES, GIJSBERT HANEKROOT/REDFERNS, IAN DICKSON/REDFERNS

On fire: Eno with John Cale and engineer John Wood mixing live album *June 1, 1974*

BUDDIES & ENO: ON RECORD

Digging into BRIAN ENO's many collaborations, and avoiding the "drone rut". BY JON DALE

BRIAN Eno left Roxy Music in 1973, effectively severing his ties with the 'group dynamic' at the same time. While he often produces groups, he's not really joined one since. Instead he's a musician and thinker who works best when he has an inspired conspirator to bounce ideas off, and some of the most significant shifts in Eno's music have come about through these collaborations, mostly via accidental aesthetic or conceptual discoveries that have come from the push-and-pull of collaborative endeavour.

Some of Eno's earliest appearances on record suggest he was once very interested in massed group dynamics. See, for example, his membership of the Scratch Orchestra, founded by composers Cornelius Cardew, Howard Skempton and Michael Parsons in 1969, and interested in drilling down into the complexities of freely improvised music, graphic scores and modern composition. Eno took part in some of their performances before they ceased operations in 1972.

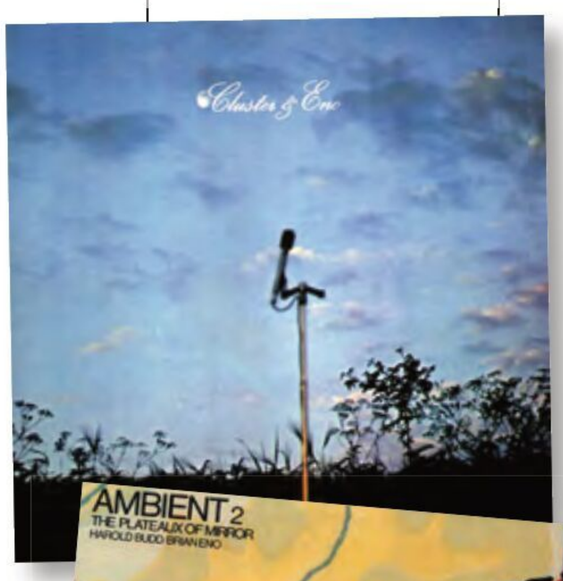
Recommended: **THE GREAT LEARNING** *DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON, 1971* ★★★★.

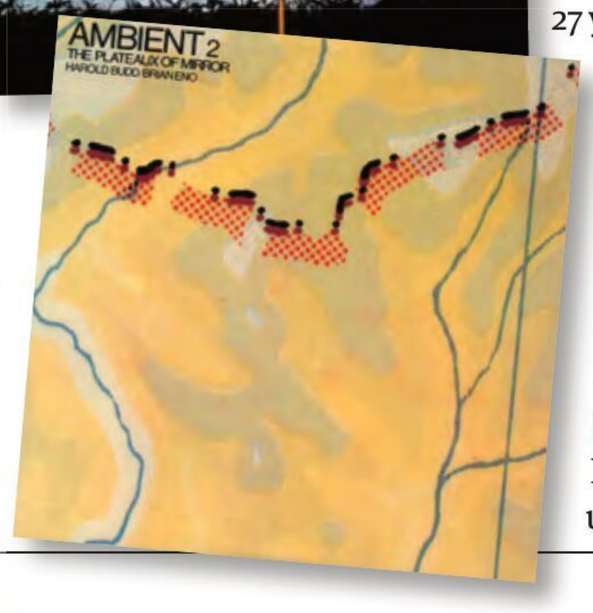
Portsmouth Sinfonia was an orchestra formed from the Portsmouth School of Art. With Gavin Bryars one of the founding members and a driving force, the Sinfonia operated on a particularly open-access, free-for-all membership basis: if you couldn't play an instrument, then you were welcome. And if you could, you should play an instrument that you hadn't touched before. The end result was often hilarious – the players slip out of time and tune, and performances of classics like "Also Spracht Zarathustra" court the ridiculous – but often oddly moving. Eno played clarinet and produced two albums.

Recommended: **PLAYS THE POPULAR CLASSICS** *TRANSATLANTIC, 1973* ★★★★.

Some of Eno's most important early collaborative work, though, was with King Crimson guitarist Robert Fripp. With the latter weaving his guitar through Eno's complex delay and tape systems, they recorded some gorgeous albums of horizontal psychedelia, carefully avoiding getting stuck in the "drone rut" that Eno thought these kinds of projects risked. They returned to the collaboration in the 2000s, but the '70s albums are key.

ENO AND FRIPP RECORDED SOME GORGEOUS ALBUMS OF HORIZONTAL PSYCHEDELIA





MICK GOLD/REDFERNS

Recommended: **(NO PUSSYFOOTING)** *ISLAND, 1973* ★★★★; **EVENING STAR** *ISLAND, 1975* ★★★★.

Eno would turn up in some interesting places in the '70s: playing synth on a rock adaptation of Prokofiev's *Peter And The Wolf*; with Peter Sinfield on a setting of American writer Robert Sheckley's *In A Land Of Clear Colours*; with underground legend Lady June on her *Linguistic Leprosy*. He also reconnected with old pal Phil Manzanera in live outfit 801, and in a revue, of sorts, with Kevin Ayers, John Cale and Nico, the recording of their "ACNE" show featuring a fantastic "Baby's On Fire".

Recommended: **JUNE 1, 1974** *ISLAND, 1974* ★★★.

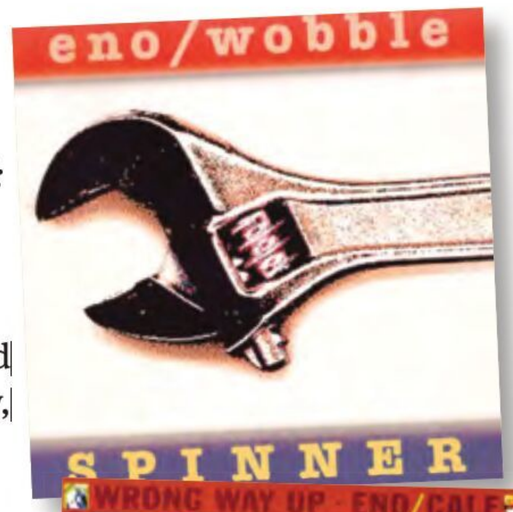
However, Eno's best collaborations from this time were with Dieter Moebius and Hans-Joachim Roedelius, aka German duo Cluster – taking their sugared proto-electronica fantasias and landing them in a more serene, melodic, melancholic place.

Recommended: **CLUSTER & ENO** *SKY, 1977* ★★★★; **AFTER THE HEAT** *SKY, 1978* ★★★★. This material seemed to inform where Eno was headed during the '80s: the ambient series, where Eno produced and/or worked alongside Harold Budd and Laraaji. *Recommended:* **AMBIENT 2: THE PLATEAUX OF MIRROR** *EDITIONS EG, 1980* ★★★★.

Alongside his burgeoning interest in ambient music, Eno also worked with Jon Hassell on the first of the 'fourth world' series, drawing the then-nascent world music phenomenon and electronics together. *Recommended:* **FOURTH WORLD VOLUME 1: POSSIBLE MUSICS** *EDITIONS EG, 1980* ★★★★. This set the groundwork, too, for Eno's first album with Talking Heads' David Byrne, where their imagined "psychedelic Africa" was leavened with primitive sampling techniques. It's an often-thrilling set; another collaboration, 27 years later, didn't pack the same punch, sadly.

Recommended: **MY LIFE IN THE BUSH OF GHOSTS** *SIRE, 1981* ★★★★. Another web of collaborations – with figures like Daniel Lanois, Harold Budd, Michael Brook and brother Roger Eno – appeared during the mid-'80s, all garlanded with droplets of shivery ambience and lustrous melancholia. The highlight is the dreamworld astral country of **APOLLO: ATMOSPHERES & SOUNDTRACKS** *EG, 1983* ★★★★, though the Budd/Eno/Lanois set, **THE PEARL** *EDITIONS EG, 1984* ★★★★, is also undeniably lovely. 1990 saw Eno reunited with John Cale,

making a wonderful pop album, whose recording was fractious and stressful, though that anxiety seemed to wring particularly moving performances from both players. ***Recommended:*** **WRONG WAY UP** *OPAL, 1990* ★★★★.



BY the '90s, though, Eno seemed to be more of a thinker/philosopher, and record producer, than a non-musician. Certainly, his production duties for rock groups like U2 and James took up a lot of time. Yet he still managed to spin some interesting material out of these circumstances: see the Passengers grouping with U2, Howie B and Luciano Pavarotti. **ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACKS 1** *ISLAND, 1995* ★★★ is, to be frank, a bit of a mess, but there are a few lovely moments within. While recording *Laid* with James, he had the group improvise loose motifs and jams, which were turned into a limited album, **WAH WAH** *FONTANA, 1994* ★★★; it's good, but not essential.

Then there was the collaboration that wasn't – **SPINNER** *ALL SAINTS, 1995* ★★★ with Jah Wobble – where the latter recorded material over the top of the master tapes for Eno's soundtrack compositions for Derek Jarman's film *Glitterbug*. Half a decade later, Eno could be found pottering around, creating sound installations with German composer J Peter Schwalm, their **DRAWN FROM LIFE** *OPAL, 2001* ★★★ a curious, if slight, experiment. This seemed to mark out much of Eno's work from the turn of the century: sound accompanying visual and spatial art practices, which incidentally becomes album releases.

A more recent wave of collaborations places Eno alongside figures like John Hopkins, Leo Abrahams, Tom Rogerson, Underworld's Rick Hyde, and poet Rick Holland. These collaborations, mostly, settle into a certain groove; undemanding, nice enough, but somehow lacking, they're not necessary by any means, though it's nice to know Eno is engaging with artists from younger generations.

One recent collaboration has stood out, however: Eno with My Bloody Valentine's Kevin Shields. They may have only recorded two pieces together, but "The Weight Of History" and "Once Only Away My Son" are excellent, deeply seductive works of immersive electronics. ***Recommended:*** **THE WEIGHT OF HISTORY** *OPAL, 2018* ★★★★.

Ghost musterers: David Byrne and Eno, 1981

E.G., for example

Joining the dots between public school, Crimson and Roxy...

MORE management team than label, those toiling in the Bryan Ferry boiler room were a league of extraordinary gentlemen. Consisting of old Harrovians David Enthoven (the E) and John Gaydon (the G), EG Records were stylish and astute champions of the enigmatic and eccentric end of '70s music. Ferry himself recalls the pair's own musical outfit A Band Of Angels (Gaydon was guitarist, Enthoven tour manager) as "gentlemen at play... They had their Harley Davidsons and they were like public schoolboy Hells Angels with their leather jackets and cowboy boots."

After the band split, Gaydon and Enthoven worked at talent agency Noel Gay Artists before launching their own management company – first signing King Crimson, whom the pair discovered at a basement rehearsal beneath the Fulham Palace Café. Enthoven remortgaged his house to fund *In The Court Of The Crimson King* and its success allowed for rapid expansion, with ELP and T.Rex gathering under the EG management umbrella. The team developed a rep as outlandish tastemakers: "as mad as tits", Enthoven once said, "but successful".

> "THEY WERE LIKE PUBLIC SCHOOLBOY HELLS ANGELS"
> BRYAN FERRY

There was also something of a familial gentlemen's club feel to the organisation's Chelsea offices. Roxy came to EG's attention at the suggestion of Crimson's Pete Sinfield, who was impressed by Ferry's audition to replace Greg Lake as Crimson's singer. Signing Roxy to a management deal on Valentine's Day 1972 and swiftly negotiating a deal with Island, EG bagged their first Top 10 hit within months with "Virginia Plain", produced, along with Roxy's debut album, by Sinfield.

By the time EG became an actual label in the late '70s both Gaydon and Enthoven had departed, leaving the business in the hands of accountant Sam Alder and businessman Mark Fenwick. The label thrived on the back of Eno, Roxy and Fripp releases, but by the '90s Alder and Fenwick's investments in Lloyd's Of London, and its subsequent near-collapse, proved almost fatal to EG's finances. The label was sold to Virgin in 1992, but several EG alumni remain major players in the music world: Enthoven's ie:music manages Robbie Williams and Fenwick manages Roger Waters. EG Records, meanwhile, still enjoys a reputation as a pioneering force in early-'70s rock.

MARK BEAUMONT

OH, FERRY CLEVER

NME's many Ferry-needling nicknames

BYRON FERRARI
NME Jan 19, 1974
The tortured poet of the sports car set; the name that launched a thousand Ferry puns.

EL FERRANTI
NME July 13, 1974
The swashbuckling moniker Ferry himself coined when duelling with his critics in a Nick Kent article: "I suppose you'll call that a counter-thrust... a parry... or the Sting of El Ferranti..."

BRAWN FURY
NME Dec 21, 1974
Bryan's basketball alter ago, as imagined by *NME* hack Max Bell when regaled with tales of Ferry's sporting past.

BIRYANI FERRET
(numerous)
Charles Shaar Murray and Tony Tyler were prominent in concocting Bryan's aliases, purely to annoy him. The curried polecat was a particularly lingering irritation. See also: Brian Fury.

HOW GAUCHE CAN A GAUCHO GET?
NME October 5, 1974
Ferry emerges to promote *Country Life* in full South American regalia. Tony Tyler's headline writes itself.

ZORRO UNMASKED
NME October 5, 1974
In the same issue, the cover went for the bandito hat angle.

THE PRISONER
NME March 4, 1978
A tongue-in-cheek reference to Bryan reading from a Byron poem titled "The Prisoner Of Chillon" during a photo shoot.

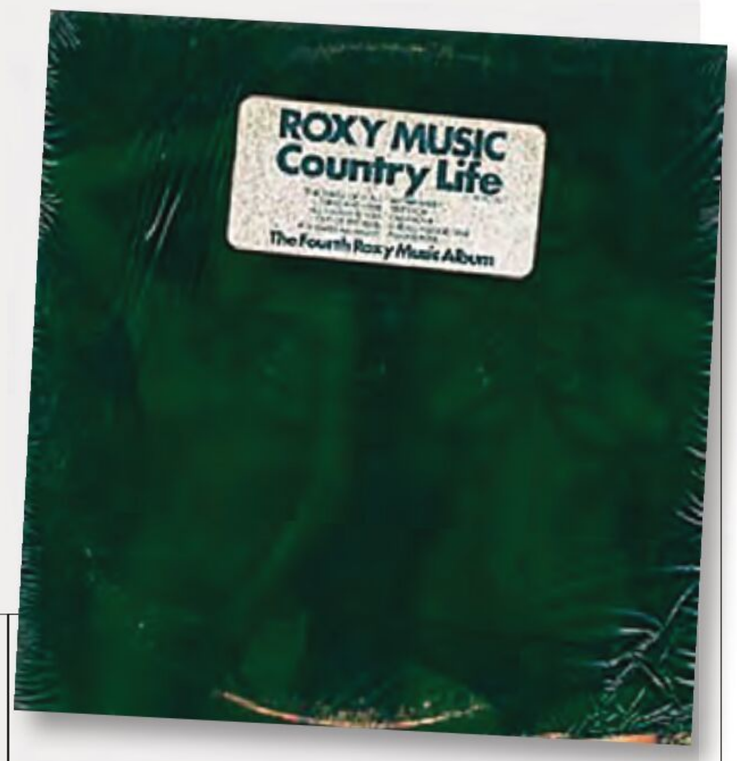
THE BARON AT BAY
NME August 30, 1975
Hearing tell of the acreage of his palatial Ladbroke Grove pad, *NME*'s sub-editors gave Ferry a suitably gentrified title.

THE WORLD'S MOST ELEGANTLY WORSTED HUMAN BEING
NME November 25, 1978
Finding Ferry a vision in wool and cashmere, Tony Parsons pulls hard on the thread of knitwear puns.
HARK GAUMONT

ROBERTA BAYLEY/REDFERNS

TREASURE SO RRRRRRRRARE!

In every dream home... A promotional diorama or radio transcription disc!



COLLECTING Roxy Music isn't likely to make you poor (or inordinately rich, for that matter). But in the absence of holy grails to compare to, say, Bowie's dress cover or the Pistols on A&M, there are some tasty valuables out there nonetheless. First runs of well-kept Roxy **LPs** tend to fetch modest double figures, whereas original test pressings go for much higher. If you're lucky enough to own a white-label copy of the debut album, in stereo with fully laminated gatefold sleeve, expect to pocket over £500. The same goes for a white-label promo of 1973 follow-up ***For Your Pleasure***, though both items are pretty hard to track down these days.

The same applies to other publicity material from the early Roxy days. Island issued a batch of **promo posters** for the aforementioned second LP (below), which now go for £300 apiece. Similarly, the full press kit for 1975's ***Siren*** – essential ingredients: a five-page bio and 8 x 10in photos of each member, housed in a nifty folder – are up near the £400 mark. In 1979, Polydor announced their stewardship of Roxy by making large circular shop displays of ***Manifesto***, featuring the partying mannequins that Bryan Ferry, Antony Price and others had created for the album cover.

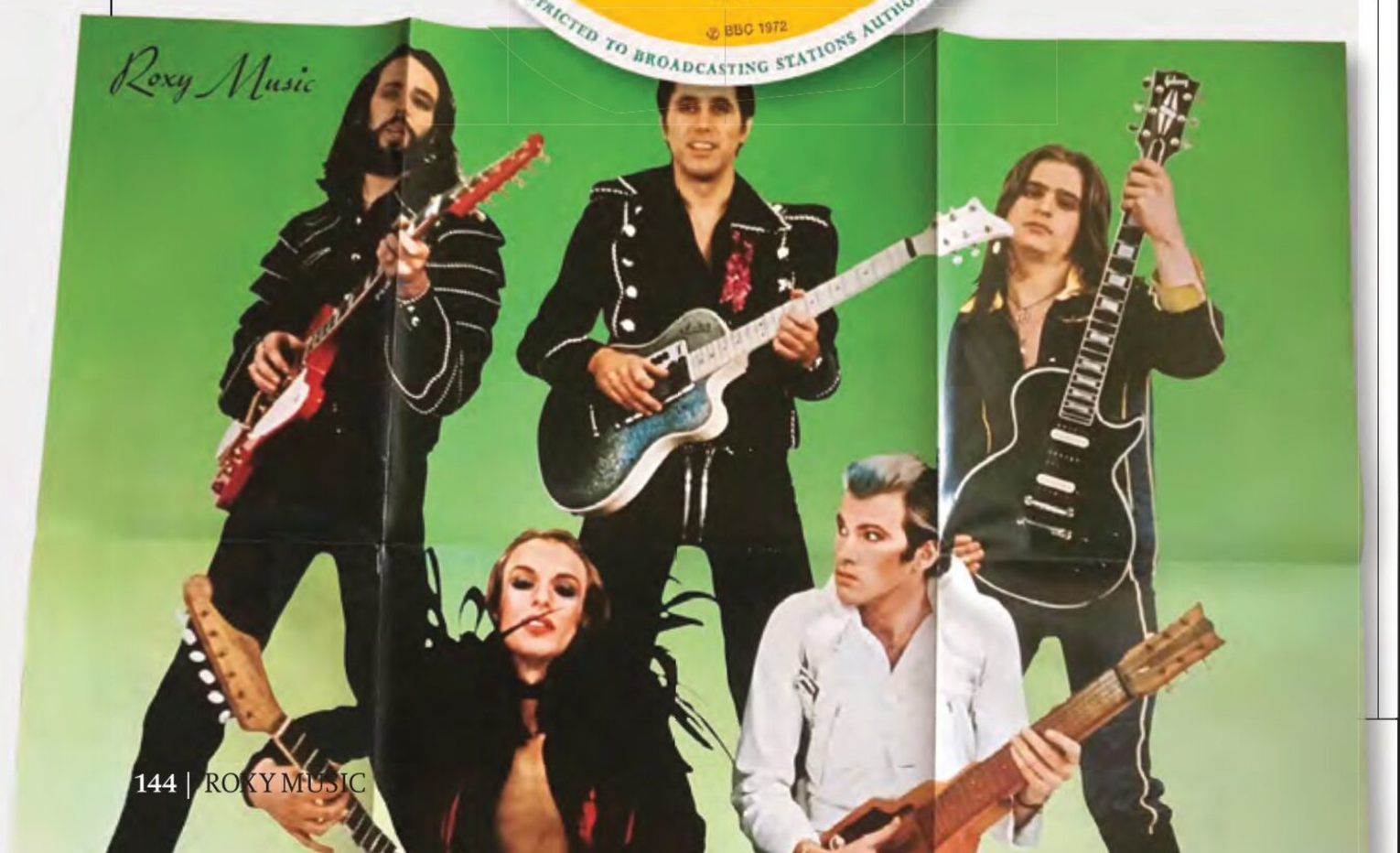
GOOD LUCK HUNTING DOWN US COPIES OF 1974'S *COUNTRY LIFE*

They currently sell for around £100, though (at the time of going to press) a hopeful eBayer had one listed for a curiously exacting £1,125.75.

Two of the rarest recordings are to be found on ***Top Of The Pops – 408***, issued by the BBC Transcription Service in August 1972. A hundred copies were pressed and sent out to radio stations, who duly received a seven-minute interview with Slade and BBC-specific tracks by Hawkwind, Mott The Hoople and Roxy (a live "Virginia Plain", plus an early prototype of "Re-Make/Re-Model" from earlier that year, featuring Davy O'List on guitar). The sampler's scarcity is reflected in its value: upwards of £500.

Further from home, good luck hunting down US copies of 1974's ***Country Life***. After the UK-approved sleeve was deemed too risqué for certain territories (lest they be offended by the sight of cover stars Constanze Karoli and Eveline Grunwald in their underwear), Atco housed it in opaque green shrink wrap for the American market, then fixed a sticker over the top. When the label went for a full redesign shortly after, the girls were ditched for some tasteful shrubbery. Original shrink-wrapped copies – fully intact, of course – will set you back £300 today.

ROB HUGHES



"It's a matter of people drifting off"

And on bass... The many low-end players of ROXY MUSIC, by BRYAN FERRY. "I never saw him again..."

GRAHAM SIMPSON

TENURE: 1970 to April 1972

WHO: Ferry's university friend, Simpson was a founder member of Roxy Music but, depressed by his mother's death from cancer, quit after recording the debut album, travelling the world until 1982 studying cultures such as Sufism. He died in 2012.

BRYAN SAYS: "I was at university with Graham. He and I were the founders of the thing really. I worked together with him first on my songs... Graham was there from the very beginning. Great guy. Very into jazz. He had a huge collection of jazz albums. Proper albums, like Blue Note vinyl stuff. He loved Eric Dolphy in particular. He was a real hipster, Graham, a very, very cool guy. It all got to him somehow. He got interested in Sufism, and I don't know, I suppose certain psychedelics went with it, and by the time we had finished making the first album he didn't want to be involved any more. It's happened with a few bands where somebody walks away, they just didn't want it. I don't know if he thought we were becoming too show business, dressing up for the first album cover. We thought we were just embracing the theatre of it, we thought it made the whole thing of doing it more interesting, we just thought it was fun – but I don't think Graham liked that and he just disappeared. He went travelling and stuff. I never saw him again."

RIK KENTON

TENURE: June 1972 to December 1972

WHO: Formerly of Woody Kern, Kenton lasted just six months in Roxy, after which he embarked on a solo career and eventually formed the short-lived Savage Progress in 1982.

BRYAN SAYS: "He was only there a short while. He did play on one of the tracks, but he didn't play on an album. He might have played on 'Virginia Plain', but I can't remember."

JOHN PORTER

TENURE: February 1973

WHO: A member of Ferry's pre-Roxy band Gas Board brought in to record *For Your Pleasure*, Porter would go on to produce Roxy records as well as albums by The Smiths, BB King and Billy Bragg, among many others.

BRYAN SAYS: "He was a guitar player who was in my band at college. He had a bass as well as his second instrument and he came and played bass for us, incredible bass, on *For Your Pleasure*, which is still one of my favourite records I've ever been involved with. John played on that and then he helped me produce my first solo album and played bass and guitar on that. He played on *Another Time, Another Place* but he wouldn't join Roxy. I asked him to, and he did a few shows with us in '73. He's on film at the Montreux Festival with us. Fantastic player. John was always at Basing Street working there, then he went to America and produced a lot of blues guys, like Buddy Guy, and now he's living in New Orleans, and before I die I'd like to go and record with him in New Orleans. John was the one who got away."

SAL MAIDA

TENURE: Touring bassist 1973

Roxy with touring bassist Sal Maida (second right), October 1973

WHO: An ace-face around London's rock scene in the late '60s, Maida would move on from Roxy to play with Sparks and Milk'n'Cookies.
BRYAN SAYS: "He was a guy who toured with us, an American."

JOHN GUSTAFSON

TENURE: 1973 to June 1975
WHO: Former member of The Big Three, Cavern contemporaries of The Beatles, "Gus" joined Roxy as studio-based bassist for three albums from *Stranded*, playing only sporadic live engagements. On leaving Roxy in 1975 he joined the Ian Gillan Band and later reformed The Pirates in the '80s.
BRYAN SAYS: "'Love Is The Drug' wouldn't have been anything without the bass-playing. It really bought that track alive. He originally played in one of those Mersey bands; I think it was called The Big Three. He was around at Beatles' time."

JOHN WETTON

TENURE: Touring bassist 1974
WHO: Singer and bassist in King Crimson for two years, Wetton joined Roxy for a tour in 1974 before leaving to form UK with Bill Bruford and later find global success as singer in Asia. Wetton also played on several of Ferry's solo albums. He died in 2017.
BRYAN SAYS: "John was a fantastic player. He went off with his own band, he wanted to be a singer – he's a good singer – a very good player. I still marvel at the bass on 'Let's Stick Together'. You can't get people to play it as well as he did it."

ALAN SPENNER

TENURE: 1978 to 1983
WHO: Having played with Joe Cocker at Woodstock and in the original production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, Spenner saw out Roxy's latter period (alongside former Vibrator and future Ant Gary Tibbs) as part of a hugely varied career backing the likes of Peter Frampton, Ted Nugent, David Coverdale and Kenny Loggins. Spenner died in 1991, aged 43.
BRYAN SAYS: "The wonderful Alan Spenner would still be in the band now if he hadn't died, if the band hadn't split up. He was a great admirer of Marcus Miller, who I ended up working with. It's all down to feel, and it's very hard to find players who play the bass well. We still have a track he played on that we haven't finished which is really pretty cool. So it's a matter of people drifting off."

Stranded/Country Life/Siren studio bassist John Gustafson

Here's looking at you, kid

The velvet curtain draws back on Roxy's live DVDs, documentaries and footage compilations

ENO (1973)

Hidden across the internet are many Roxy Easter eggs – try typing "Roxy Music German TV" into YouTube and prepare to lose a month of your life. Rarest of all, though, is this post-Roxy documentary tracing Eno's Roxy journey and the recording of *Here Come The Warm Jets*. Try hunting through Bryan Ferry fanpage videos on Facebook for it, and the very best of luck.

ROXY MUSIC: IN CONCERT – LIVE ON THE ROAD (1979)

Compared to the later *Live At The Apollo*, this 50-minute 10-tracker recorded at Manchester's Apollo on the 1979 *Manifesto* tour inevitably feels flimsy, but its energy is inescapable, capturing the post-punk Roxy at a stage that perfectly illuminates their influence on – and, by turn, from – the new wave.

ROXY MUSIC: THE HIGH ROAD (1982)

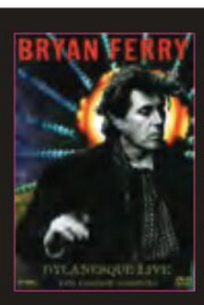
Black-tie Roxy caught at Frejus in France on the velvet-lined *Avalon* tour in August 1982. Vibe of Nile Rodgers' wedding reception, rider by Fererro Rocher. Not to be confused with the live EP of the same name, but worth a view if you've never seen a man in a dinner jacket play air bass.

BRYAN FERRY: IN CONCERT – LIVE IN PARIS AT LE GRAND REX (2001)

Lounge comes to Paris in the springtime as Ferry tours his classy show of '30s and '40s standards, from his *As Time Goes By* album, around the seat of romance in March 2000. It's cocktail-bar karaoke that made the case for a Roxy reunion evident, but the smoky takes on "Avalon" and "Jealous Guy" make perseverance worthwhile.

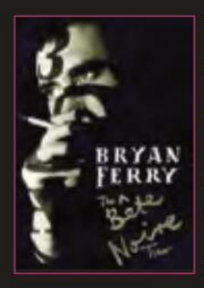
ROXY MUSIC: LIVE AT THE APOLLO (2002)

Two exhilarating hours in the company of the reunited Roxy at London's Hammersmith Apollo Theatre in October 2001. A comprehensive setlist, Roxy magnificently reviving their art-rock roots in a succession of shiny blazers and a 17-minute documentary and rehearsal footage thrown in. Little heartache isn't danced away by the end.



BRYAN FERRY: DYLANESQUE LIVE, THE LONDON SESSIONS (2007)

Filming a full run through 2007's Dylan covers LP in a studio gives Ferry leeway to expound on his love of the folk legend and his own soft-rocking interpretations between songs. A touching and heartfelt tribute to our Bob.



BRYAN FERRY: THE BÊTE NOIRE TOUR (2008)

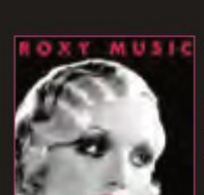
A belated DVD release for footage from Ferry's slick 1988–89 New Town Tour, compiling material from Bête Noire and the un-toured *Boys And Girls*. The new material is sodden with the world funk tropes of the '80s A-listers, but "Ladytron", "Love Is The Drug" and "Do The Strand" get moneyed, Floydish reworkings.

MORE THAN THIS: THE STORY OF ROXY MUSIC (2009)

Featuring the talking heads of all of the original band members, producers, managers and luminaries of punk, glam and disco, 2009's *More Than This* stakes a claim for being the most definitive Roxy documentary to date, although too short and throwaway to sate the appetites of the deep-diving Ferryphile.

LIVE IN LYON (2013)

If the more album-specific Ferry DVDs don't appeal, *Live In Lyon* is a fine comp of Roxy essentials, solo hits and the pick of the covers, all given a respectful gloss at the Roman amphitheatre in Lyon during the 2011 Nuits de Fourvière Festival. Crumbling columns and dancing girls? *Naturellement*.



THE THRILL OF IT ALL: ROXY MUSIC (2018)

A visual history compiling live footage, TV recordings and videos from 1972 through to 1982, including copious, gloriously grainy *Top Of The Pops* and *Old Grey Whistle Test* appearances and a cornucopia of performances for German TV. One for professors in the evolution of Roxy.

MARK BEAUMONT

JORGEN ANGEL/REDFERNS, FIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS

OUTRO

Stop Me

if you've heard this one before

Cardiff, September 1974. ALLAN JONES (and his dad) escort Bryan Ferry's gaucho outfit to its Welsh unveiling…

THIS is the first time *Melody Maker* lets me go on the road with a band, an experience I enjoy so much that despite much domestic howling, on the road's pretty much where I stay for the next 12 years.

Anyway, I'm sitting on a train at Paddington that's about to leave for South Wales, waiting nervously for Simon Puxley, Roxy Music's permanently harassed "media consultant", who's supposed to be coming with me to Cardiff, where tonight Roxy are opening their *Country Life* tour at the Capitol Theatre.

Whistles blow, doors slam, the train shudders, stalls and starts again. I'm convinced that Simon's missed the train when the compartment door flies open and Simon falls through it, more flustered than ever. He's red-faced, jacket askew, wearing what looks like someone else's hair and breathing heavily. Still wheezing, he shoves a couple of bags into the luggage rack and with rather more delicacy hangs from the rack a large suit holder, which he carefully straightens out, his fingers running over its surface as if it's some legendary religious icon, something for which he'd give up his life rather than surrender to the hands of strangers, or anyone else who might want to get their mitts on it.

I wonder what priceless treasure the hanger might contain and whistle, impressed, when Simon tells me it's Bryan Ferry's *new stage outfit*, the bespoke manufacture of which has only just been completed, presumably in a last-minute flurry of nipping and tucking, Simon picking it up on his way to Paddington to deliver to Bryan in Cardiff, where it will be unveiled tonight.

Simon's just settling into his seat, breathing getting back to normal, when the carriage door's again thrown open. A looming scarecrow of a man in a filthy overcoat, with eyes as wild as his hair, starts shouting at us in the manner of some demented old seadog. "Do you have change to spare for a shipwrecked man?" asks the vision in the doorway, who now staggers forward into the carriage, his attention caught by Bryan's New Stage Outfit, swinging from the luggage rack, which he beadily eyes up, as if he may make off with it. Simon looks like he's going to faint.

"A few coppers, *if you please*," the impoverished mariner pleads.

Simon can't get his wallet out quick enough, the crusty old timer's eyes now a-glint as Simon peels off a couple of fivers, which he greedily grabs and kisses noisily before ramming the notes deep into the pockets of his soiled and threadbare trousers. He then fishes in the pocket of his overcoat and pulls out a can of beer, already open, which he pours on the hapless Puxley's head, as if in some kind of arcane anointment, simultaneously making over Simon's head some gesture I take to be the sign of the evil eye, or something similar.

> "LOOK FOR THE NEAREST MIRROR. BRYAN WILL BE IN FRONT OF IT"
> ANDY MACKAY

We get to Cardiff without further incident, Simon holding on tight to the bag with Bryan's New Stage Outfit as we walk out of the station, where I'm taken aback to meet, of all people, my parents, here to surprise me, which they do. My father now insists on driving us to the Capitol, where Bryan is waiting, no doubt impatiently, for his new stage clobber. My dad then grabs the suit holder off Simon and flings it in the boot of his car, bringing down the lid with unintended force, Simon nearly losing both hands and his arms up to the elbows when he makes a last-minute attempt to grab the suit holder, even as the lid's coming down.

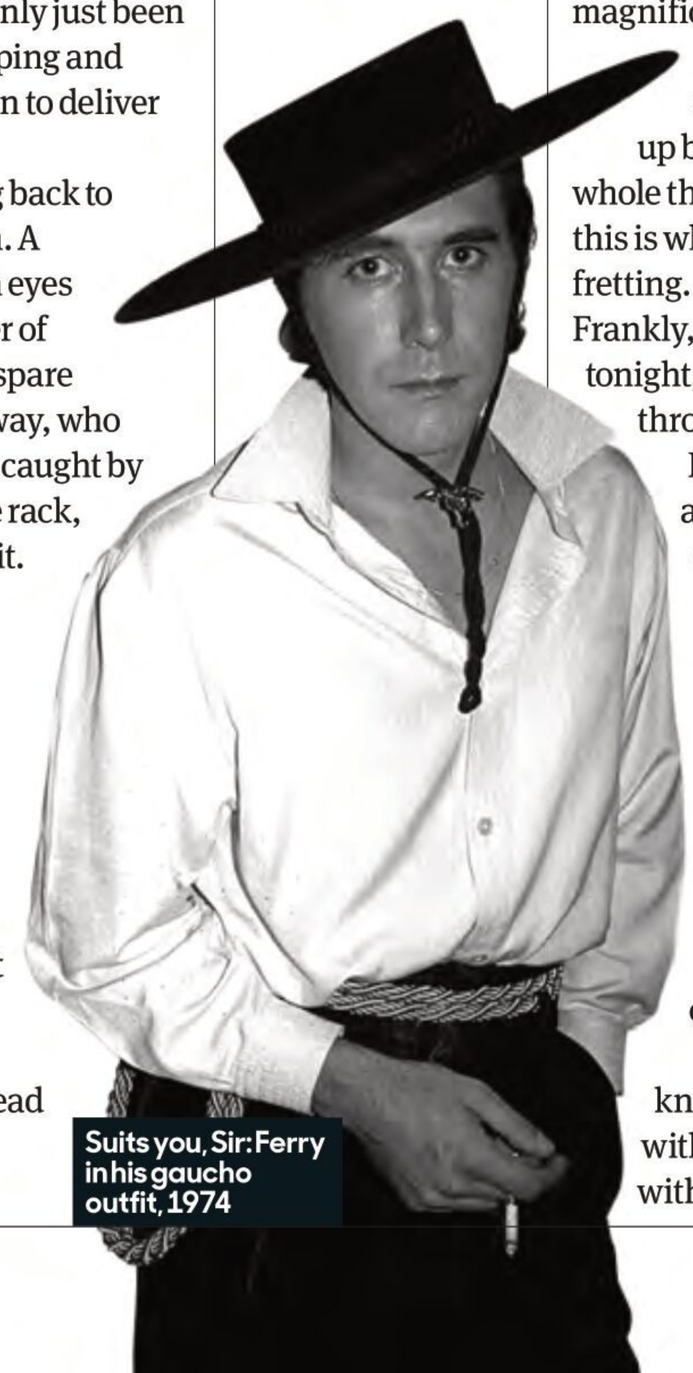
Not long after this, we're backstage with Roxy in a crowded dressing room. There's no sign of Bryan, however, or his New Stage Outfit. "Look for the nearest mirror," Andy Mackay says. "He'll be in front of it."

I'M standing at the side of the stage now, and as their taped intro fades to silence, Manzanera leads the band into their opening number, "Prairie Rose", which no-one's heard as it's from the unfinished new album, *Country Life*, which should have been out by now. It's great, but where's Bryan? And what will he be wearing when finally we get to see him in his new gear? There's a movement now on the far side of the stage, which I take to be Bryan, getting ready for his grand entrance – and indeed, here he comes, sauntering in semi-darkness to the mic in the centre of the stage. The lights go up as he hits his spot, and there's a gasp as Ferry is revealed in all his intended magnificence. And, Jesus, what the fuck's he wearing?

Looks from where I'm standing like a gaucho outfit, and it is – billowing white blouse, black pantaloons, held up by a thick length of rope, tucked into dinky wee boots, the whole thing topped off with a black sombrero, rakishly tilted. So this is what Puxley's hauled all the way from London, amid much fretting. It's not a look, I probably needn't add, that catches on. Frankly, if you walked into your local pub dressed like Ferry is tonight, people would first laugh and then pick you up and throw you under a bus for looking such a twat.

I'm speechless and still trying to find my voice the next afternoon, when I meet Ferry in his hotel room to hear some rough mixes of the new album. Compared to some of the places I've lived, Ferry's suite is positively palatial, although he's unhappy with it. "One looks at a room like this," he says airily, "and one rather thinks it looks like a council flat." He puts a tape in his cassette player, and introduces "The Thrill Of It All", which when it's finished will be *Country Life*'s opening track. What follows is an extraordinary noise. I think I can hear Manzanera's guitar somewhere in the mix, but the rest is a howling blizzard of apocalyptic noise, a great churning thing, redolent of malfunctioning machinery.

"I've never heard anything like it," I tell Ferry, not quite knowing what to say. "Er, neither have I," he says, fussing with the cassette player. "I think there's something wrong with the tape, actually."



Suits you, Sir: Ferry in his gaucho outfit, 1974

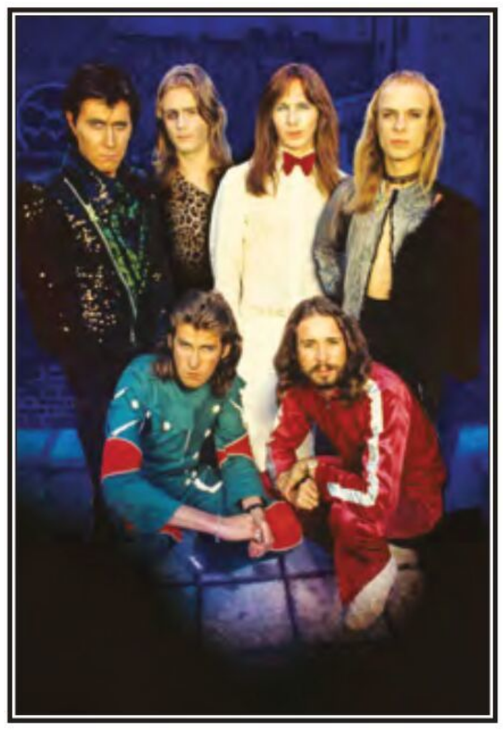
JOESTEVENS

FROM THE MAKERS OF **UNCUT**

ROXY MUSIC

As the band reform for a 50th-anniversary celebration, the deluxe — well, what else? — *Ultimate Music Guide* to Roxy Music. The full story, from "inspired amateurism" to smooth sophistication — and the occasional stylish reformation.

"Well I'm here looking through an old picture frame/Just waiting for the perfect view..."



BRIAN COOKE/REDFERNS

Including...

"I had a conviction I was going to be spectacular"

How the young Roxy made their dreams come true

"It's a very fast life I lead"

Roxy and Bryan Ferry lead from the front, 1975

"Strong cover. Jerry Hall looked like a mermaid"

50 years on, Bryan Ferry recalls for *Uncut* each detail of Roxy's success

ARCHIVE INTERVIEWS AND IN-DEPTH REVIEWS OF EVERY ROXY MUSIC ALBUM FROM *ROXY MUSIC* TO *AVALON*

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